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CABBAGE SALES • BERRIES • CARROTS • AVOCADOS • REGIONAL PROFILE: SAN FRANCISCO • SWEET POTATOES • SPORTS SNACKS • FLORAL PRODUCT BALANCE

MARCH 2009 • VOL. 25 • NO. 3 • \$9.90

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8th Annual
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SUPPLEMENT
Starts on page 51

The 21st Annual **MYSTERY SHOPPER REPORT**



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PRODUCE QUIZ



THIS MONTH'S WINNER:

Joseph Cavalier

President
Cavalier-Gulling-
Wilson Co. Inc.
Cleveland, OH



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How To Win

To win the PRODUCE BUSINESS Quiz, the first thing you have to do is enter. The rules are simple: Read through the articles and advertisements in this issue to find the answers. Fill in the blanks corresponding to the questions below, and either cut along the dotted line or photocopy the page, and send your answers along with a business card or company letterhead to the address listed on the coupon. The winner will be chosen by drawing from the responses received before the publication of our May issue of PRODUCE BUSINESS. The winner must agree to submit a color photo to be published in that issue.

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With 35 years of experience in the produce industry, Joseph Cavalier, president of Cavalier-Gulling-Wilson Co. Inc., knows the importance of building positive relationships with the people he works with on a daily basis. In business for 85 years, the family-owned and operated wholesale distributor is based in Cleveland, OH.

"We work with just about every produce commodity except for bananas," he explains. "There's a lot of characters in this industry. I enjoy developing and maintaining business relationships with my customers and shippers."

As president, Joseph is responsible for the sales and management side of the company. He says keeping up with his customers' needs is one of the major keys to being successful in the produce business.

A PRODUCE BUSINESS reader since its inception or a brief time thereafter, Joseph likes to read it from cover to cover. "It gives you the whole ball of wax!"

As the winner of the PRODUCE BUSINESS Quiz, Joseph wins a survivor's pack.

QUESTIONS FOR THE MARCH ISSUE

- 1) How much money has PFK raised to benefit children? _____
- 2) How many weekly sailings does Crowley conduct? _____
- 3) How many years has Ocean Mist been growing artichokes? _____
- 4) What is the phone number for The Live Gourmet Family? _____
- 5) What is the slogan for the U.S. Sweet Potato Council? _____
- 6) What is the color of Calavo's "Ripe Now" sticker? _____

This issue was: ☐ Personally addressed to me ☐ Addressed to someone else

Name _____ Position _____

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State _____ Zip _____

one _____ Fax _____

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MARCH QUIZ PRODUCE BUSINESS • P.O. Box 810425 • Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425

producebusiness

MAR. 2009 • VOL. 25 • NO.3

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PRODUCE BUSINESS is published by
Phoenix Media Network, Inc.
James E. Prevor, Chairman of the Board
P.O. Box 810425

Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425

Phone: 561-994-1118 Fax: 561-994-1610

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Printed in the U.S.A.

Publication Agreement No. 40047928





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they come with
a bodyguard.



Discover the beauty and science of Tanimura & Antle's Artisan™ Lettuce, now shipping in our new clamshell that is scientifically engineered to cradle and protect each head of lettuce. This innovative package uses up to 12% less material than a typical square clamshell, saving limited resources.

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Employee Free Choice Act Threatens The Produce Industry

Last month, the 111th Congress and a new Administration took office and prepared to move forward with much-publicized change on many fronts. As new legislation hits the House and Senate floor, many industries with representation in Washington find themselves closely monitoring what effects this change will have. While there is a great deal of promise in the air in Washington, D.C., there is also a definite feeling of apprehension on behalf of United Fresh and allied produce industry partners surrounding one particular piece of legislation.

The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), or “card-check” legislation, has seen its prospects for passage vastly improve after the November elections. Although the EFCA has been introduced in successive sessions of Congress, it has, to date, failed to gain the necessary votes for passage. Additionally, strong opposition from the Bush Administration ensured a veto if the legislation was passed.

The recent elections have significantly improved the prospects for the EFCA, however. Current Congressional sponsors are very close to having the necessary votes for passage. Given President Obama's previous co-sponsorship of the legislation and his strong advocacy on the campaign trail, a veto seems highly unlikely.

United Fresh is strongly opposed to the goals and objectives of EFCA. The inaccurately named legislation will only serve to limit employees' freedom to choose who negotiates on their behalf. Backers of the legislation seek to modify the 75 year-old National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), signed

by Franklin Roosevelt, by eliminating federally overseen secret ballot elections in which workers decide whether or not to establish a union as a collective bargaining representative. As an alternative, unions

Passage of card-check legislation will:

- Eliminate secret ballot elections
- Impose binding arbitration if a contract is not ratified during a truncated negotiating period
- Restrict employers' actions during workplace organizing campaigns

want to circulate petitions to employees, thereby keeping a watchful eye on who does and does not support the organizing effort.

Adding to concerns, upon certification of a union under the EFCA, employers are stripped of the authority to negotiate and agree to an initial collective bargaining

agreement. If the employer and union cannot come to agreement after the unusually abbreviated timeframe of 120 days, the matter would be referred to binding arbitration with a mandatory contract ultimately being forced upon the employer. Furthermore, the legislation also includes language sanctioning employer actions against union organizing, while at the same time requiring no such accountability on the part of unions for their actions during workplace organizational campaigns.

The elimination of union employees' right to federally overseen, secret ballot elections for the purposes of union certification is a massive issue for the fresh and fresh-cut produce industry, as well as the allied industries that help ensure the success of the businesses that United Fresh and other industry organizations represent. The elimination of this right will erode employees' workplace security, expose workers to intimidation and most importantly, upset the precarious balance between the interests of union leadership and those of employers.

In the interest of educating our industry partners about this potential harm, United Fresh has launched an online resource center dedicated to the effort against card-check legislation. Additionally, we have joined with like-minded stakeholders on the steering committee of the Coalition for a Democratic Workplace, a broad-based industry group strongly opposed to the EFCA.

United Fresh will continue to represent the produce industry and all allied industries in an effort to defeat these legislative and regulatory actions that seek to undermine the most basic of worker's rights. **pb**



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Good Decisions In Bad Times

When times are good, businesses often sustain money-losing operations. Partly it is because they can, as they have other businesses producing good profits. Partly it is out of an abundance of hope that with just a little more investment and tolerance of a bit more in the way of losses, the business will turn around and become profitable. Partly it is because closing down losing operations is often emotionally difficult, and it may mean admitting one was wrong or telling people who may have done no wrong themselves that they are fired.

Bad times tend to simplify such decisions. If core operations are no longer producing bountiful profits, the decision to not spend money one doesn't have is fairly easy. These are company-by-company decisions, but on the production side of the produce industry they tend to group around a common theme: Fire the customers or customer segments that won't pay enough to allow you to make a living.

Tanimura & Antle was ahead of the curve on this, announcing last winter that it would no longer sell to unaffiliated processors as the business wasn't profitable. The months since have seen a bloodbath in Salinas, with River Ranch basically being taken over by the banks and company after company engaging in layoffs. Chiquita stock tumbled recently in no small part because of the results from its Fresh Express subsidiary, which included significant volume declines based on a decision to stop serving foodservice customers that are unwilling to pay a profitable price.

Now it is, of course, easy to fire customers and hard to get new ones. So careful attention has to be paid as to why these customers are unprofitable. If a producer's food safety program is world class, its traceability investment is substantial and its focus on sustainability is meaningful, perhaps it may well be difficult to sell to customers that are not willing to pay for these values. In circumstances such as these, the whole industry has a stake in understanding why segments of the business are not profitable. In all too many cases, it is about buyers not being mindful of supply chain responsibilities.

Sometimes well capitalized producers intentionally sell cheap. They absorb losses as part of a "last man standing" philosophy, thinking everyone else will reduce production while they will gain market share until they are in a position to raise prices. It is a theory, but usually markets can remain cheap long enough to exhaust anyone's capital. Mostly, though, producers sell cheap not out of any grand strategy but because they don't know what else to do.

Some very progressive firms have transformed their whole busi-

nesses, striving to get away from being a pure commodity shipper. Producers such as Sun World have done this by focusing on proprietary varieties, and firms such as Mann Packing morphed into value-added powerhouses.

Sometimes it is as simple as deciding to no longer invest in areas earning inadequate returns and gradually transitioning to more profitable ventures. Of course, looking at the situation this way requires one to define oneself and one's business in less limited terms. If one is simply only a "round, white potato farmer," then one will certainly face challenges.

But that is very much an old version of the business. The younger participants are often very flexible, not looking to mimic Grandpa but looking for opportunity, which may be the silver lining to the recession. If this economic slump forces us to look at what we are really good at, to think about what customers really need, to open our eyes to how consumers think and to consider how new technologies can intersect with new business structures to create new opportunities, then the recession will lay the groundwork for great success in the years to come.

It can take courage to tell a customer no. But time and again, we have seen good producers get called back when the cheaper alternative turns out not to be so great.

One place producers need to start improving is gathering better numbers. It actually is not always easy to know which customers are really profitable. One customer may bargain

hard for a bargain price, but live with it. Another chain may seemingly let you have more margin, but bother you every week for a new fee or booth at a trade show or a hundred other demands. One customer may make orders and stick to them; another can change them 50 times and then reject half the product. Only careful analysis can give insight as to where the real profit lies.

And, of course, today is not all that matters. Many companies wouldn't talk to Bruce Peterson when he joined Wal-Mart, and it had all of seven supercenters; others partnered with Wal-Mart right away. It is not a coincidence that some of those early partners are now the biggest players in the industry.

Nobody wants to speak well of a recession. People lose jobs, homes, businesses, and many get hurt very badly. Yet the truth is that in tough times we all make the tough decisions that enable us to get better. What seems like terrible loss in closing operations is really like pruning little branches that were sapping strength from the main trunk. If you clear them clean, the fruit comes in larger and sweeter than ever.

pb

**In tough times
we all make the
tough decisions
that enable us to
get better.**

History

where we come from matters.



Quality

people, products and service.



Vision

innovating for the future.



Passion

for excellence in everything we do.



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MISSION PRODUCE INC. OXNARD, CA

Steven Martin was hired as director of business development. He will work closely with retailers and produce wholesalers throughout North America to introduce Mission's new ultra-high-pressure guacamole. An industry veteran with more than 40 years of experience, including 16 years at Dole Food Co. Inc., he has worked on the supply side and in retail.



SALVER AMERICAN FRESH FOODS MONTEREY, CA

Tony Incaviglia was hired as a sales team member. He will take the lead in green onion commodity sales. An industry veteran with more than 12 years of sales experience in the produce market, he most recently worked for Misionero Vegetables. According to the company, Incaviglia has a proven track record in the produce industry and possesses a vast array of industry expertise.



GROWER DIRECT MARKETING LLC STOCKTON, CA

Troy Mesa was hired to manage the company's newly opened eastern U.S. branch office in Pompano Beach, FL. An industry veteran with 24 years of experience working in produce, he will be responsible for handling direct sales for Grower Direct Marketing, a year-round shipper of fresh cherries, blueberries, asparagus and apricots.



MURANAKA FARM INC. MOORPARK, CA

Rick Goodside was hired as sales executive. An industry veteran with more than 20 years of buying and selling experience, he previously worked as senior buyer of produce for Jack in the Box. He is also a former member of the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association's Foodservice Board.



Spencer Osborne was hired as sales executive. An industry veteran with more than 20 years in the foodservice and retail sectors of the industry, he has held various positions throughout the country in sales, purchasing and operations. He previously worked for FreshPoint Inc.



BROOKS TROPICALS LLC HOMESTEAD, FL

Billy Pritchett was named vice president of operations. In his new capacity, he will manage the company's Belize operations and Homestead packing and distribution facilities. He has worked for Brooks since January 1991. After a series of promotions in the 1990s, he was promoted to vice president of Homestead packing-house operations in 2004.



NEW PRODUCTS

DIP-N-GO CUPS

PWP Industries, Vernon, CA, introduced the Dip-N-Go, a hinged, 10-fluid ounce, tamper-resistant cup. It looks like a standard, straight-walled container with a lid, but the lid can be filled with a variety of dips and sauces and transformed into a dipping cup when opened and snapped into the cup rim.



Reader Service No. 300

SWEET ONION PACKAGING

Sweet Onion Trading Co., Palm Bay, FL, began shipping medium Sunbrero brand Mexican sweet onions grown from Granex seed in new, 2- and 3-pound, orange and green vertical D-pack recipe bags. A hit with both produce managers and consumers in preliminary market tests, the easy-to-display packaging features sweet onion recipes by Chef Billy Parisi.



Reader Service No. 301

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FITNESS EXPERT LAUNCHES 'WIDGET' FOR HEALTH-CONSCIOUS CONSUMER

Idaho Potato Commission (IPC), Eagle, ID, released Dishin' Nutrition With Denise Austin, a portable, personal lifestyle assistant for health-conscious consumers. Available online at IPC's Web site, the widget serves up simple health/fitness tips and recipes that will inspire consumers to incorporate healthful habits into their everyday activities.



Reader Service No. 302

NMB ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

The National Mango Board (NMB), Orlando, FL, elected its 2009 officers. They include chair Isabel Freeland of Coast Tropical Distributors; vice chair John-Campbell Barmmer of Chestnut Hill Farms; treasurer Sue Duleba of GM Produce Sales; and secretary Bonifacio Bustamante Hernandez of CC Tropicals SA de CV.



Reader Service No. 303

WELL PICT REVAMPS WEB SITE

Well Pict Berries, Watsonville, CA, updated and improved its Web site to include more information and resources. Retailers can find an array of information on Well Pict's product line, availability and regularly updated merchandising ideas to help boost profits in the produce department. Well Pict began shipping winter strawberries from Florida in January.



Reader Service No. 304

MAC AWARDS APPLE QUEEN TITLE

The Michigan Apple Committee (MAC), DeWitt, MI, awarded Amber Nyblad of Casnovia (right) the title of 2009 Michigan Apple Queen at the 57th Annual Michigan Apple Queen Pageant. A panel of judges selected Nyblad based on poise, apple knowledge and beauty following a private interview.



Reader Service No. 305

Produce Watch is a regular feature of Produce Business. Please send information on new products, personnel changes, industry, corporate and personal milestones and available literature, along with a color photo, slide or transparency to: Managing Editor, PRODUCE BUSINESS, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425, or e-mail us at info@producebusiness.com

CAC ANNOUNCES DISPLAY CONTEST WINNERS

The California Avocado Commission (CAC), Irvine, CA, awarded 15 produce managers as part of its seasonal display contest. Conducted May 12 through Sept. 30, the contest drew more than 260 entries. Luis Alcator of Albertsons in Southern California (right) earned the grand prize in a random drawing among all qualified entries.



Reader Service No. 306

CURRY & CO. ROLLS OUT MARKETING PROGRAM

Curry & Co., Brooks, OR, launched its "Favorites" program aimed at building excitement in the onion category by not only providing a premium onion but by also supporting it with creative and colorful graphics and marketing. The year-round program includes reds, whites and yellows. The program is available in high-graphic bags in a variety of sizes.



Reader Service No. 307

SALYER PALLETS GO "GREEN"

Salyer American Fresh Foods, Monterey, CA, switched from using wood pallets to lightweight, durable, hygienic, all-plastic pallets embedded with radio frequency identification (RFID) tags from iGPS. The change marks a significant technological advantage in Salyer's domestic distribution systems while supporting efforts for environmental sustainability.



Reader Service No. 308

NPC ANNOUNCES TWO NATIONAL POTATO AWARDS

The National Potato Council (NPC), East Grand Forks, MN, awarded Mark Thompson (left), co-chair of the Northern Plains Potato Growers Association (NPPGA), the NPC Seed Grower of the Year Award. NPC also awarded Gregg Halverson (right), who is involved in several potato organizations, the Environmental Stewardship Award.



Reader Service No. 309

PFK RAISES MORE THAN \$162,000 FOR KIDS

Produce For Kids (PFK), Orlando, FL, raised more than \$162,000 this past fall as part of the "Eat Smart For a Great Start" campaign. Five participating retailers partnered with 25 produce companies to make a monetary donation. All donated funds benefit PBS KIDS and support PFK efforts to provide educational content, resources and outreach materials that promote healthful eating behavior among kids.



Reader Service No. 310

APEAM MARKETING CAMPAIGN EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

The Avocados Producers And Exporting Packers Association of Michoacán (APEAM), Los Angeles, CA, announced the success of its fully integrated marketing campaign, which reached more than 301 million general market and Hispanic consumers between Nov. 17 and Feb. 2. During the promotion, avocado sales increased 79 percent in participating stores in Texas and 25 percent in participating stores in Chicago.



Reader Service No. 311

DMA SOLUTIONS LAUNCHES BLOG

DMA Solutions Inc., Irving, TX, introduces The Core, an online blog dedicated to connecting, inspiring and engaging creative minds within the fresh produce industry. The blog features best practices, business-planning strategies, recipes as well as a question-and-answer section. The Core will be published weekly to subscribers who sign up online.



Reader Service No. 312

IMAGINATION FARMS PROMOTES VALUE-ADDED SECTION

Imagination Farms LLC, Indianapolis, IN, launched 4-foot Disney-themed, refrigerated sections with POS and modular product placement to draw moms and kids to its Disney Garden line of products. Some retailers who have incorporated the kid destination into their produce departments have reported double-digit growth across value-added Disney Garden SKUs.



Reader Service No. 313

MAXCO AND PROACTIVE FORM ALLIANCE

Maxco Supply Inc., Parlier, CA, and Proactive Packaging & Display Inc., Ontario, CA, signed a multi-year, strategic alliance agreement to better serve the agricultural industry's packaging needs by producing premium packaging with as little impact on the environment as possible. This alliance will provide for superior package contraction and graphics for consumers.



Reader Service No. 314

YETZEN CONSULTING CREATES CHILEAN PRODUCE WEB SITE

Yetzen Consulting, Las Condes, Santiago, Chile, launched Portal Frutícola, a Web site providing valuable daily decision-making information and centralized communication for the Chilean produce industry. The Web site allows users to access daily updates on market prices, economic market data, weather information and a variety of tools.



Reader Service No. 315

USHBC REPORTS SUCCESSFUL MARKETING EFFORTS

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC), Folsom, CA, continued to increase blueberry consumption through a variety of marketing programs in 2008. Its winter marketing kit, "Lighten Up the New Year," was distributed to more than 800 food and lifestyle editors. The council projects a record 2008 highbush blueberry crop of more than 413 million pounds, up from the 357 million pounds produced in 2007.



Reader Service No. 316

DOLE RECEIVES GOOD HOUSEKEEPING AWARD

Dole Fresh Fruit Co., a Westlake Village, CA-based subsidiary of Dole Food Co. Inc., announced that Dole vitamin D Portobello mushrooms were selected by Good Housekeeping magazine as one of the Top 10 Very Innovative Products of 2009. The magazine showcased Dole's award-winning products in its February issue and on its Web site.



Reader Service No. 317

Produce Watch is a regular feature of Produce Business. Please send information on new products, personnel changes, industry, corporate and personal milestones and available literature, along with a color photo, slide or transparency to: Managing Editor, PRODUCE BUSINESS, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425, or e-mail us at info@producebusiness.com

Economic Challenges And Opportunities

The incredible see-sawing of this winter's weather in Delaware brings to mind the rollercoaster ride our industry has faced the past year, with cost inputs soaring up and then plunging down along with the global financial crisis. Where inflationary pressures consumed our attention last summer, we now read daily about deflation as the current threat to watch. Are we in the produce industry better protected than most businesses to adjust to this rollercoaster ride?

The results from Produce Marketing Association's (PMA) latest consumer survey signal relief sprouting from under the cold economic downturn that took root last fall. Consumer responses show that, in general, fresh fruits and vegetables have been insulated from the harshest blows of the horrible economic conditions. In fact, the vast majority of the 500 shoppers surveyed by Opinion Dynamics for PMA say they have maintained their produce consumption at around the same level as six months prior to the survey, which was conducted Dec. 29-30, a time when holiday spending can add insult to injury for already recession-stretched shoppers.

One of the most interesting insights into shopper behavior uncovered by this latest research is that part of their steady consumption may be due to the fact that an overwhelming 95 percent of the primary shopper sample expects prices of fresh fruits and vegetables to naturally fluctuate during any given year. In other words, it is precisely because most fresh produce is viewed as a seasonal product whose price is impacted by shifts in weather and other factors that consumers give us some leeway in this poor economy. That fresh fruits and vegetables afford good economic and nutritional value because they pack many essential nutrients at a low cost per serving should only add to consumer loyalty these days.

At the same time, I need to draw your attention to continuing signs that I previously mentioned in my State of the Industry speech last October, which is that more consumers are looking at frozen foods as a cost-driven

It is precisely because most fresh produce is viewed as a seasonal product whose price is impacted by shifts of weather and other factors that consumers give us some leeway in this poor economy.

alternative to fresh produce. We have to remain very watchful of the competitive challenges posed by some frozen products, whose sensory quality, price points and convenience have improved markedly.

Retailers are being pressed to adjust to consumer demands for greater value throughout the store. Our research shows that promoting customer loyalty and purchases by re-exploring coupon solutions could go a long way in this economic downturn. Forty-three percent of the sample says they would be extremely likely to use coupons for produce, contrasted with only 33 percent who say they are not likely at all to use coupons.

Among the coupon clippers, circulars are their most likely source, followed next by mail and then in-store distribution. New technology offerings are still a small factor here — even in this age of constant connectivity, respondents cited e-mail and mobile devices as far less popular coupon-delivery vehicles. It will be very interesting to watch how this number changes over time once shoppers become more comfortable with their portable devices.

The fundamental demand for our fresh products is undeniable, and we have so many social trends on our side to drive demand. But we must also keep vigilant and focused through the current market turbulence long enough to plan for our future. In January, I was struck by the outstanding turnout and energetic dialogue at the Leadership Symposium hosted by PMA's Foundation for Industry Talent and co-sponsored by *PRODUCE*

BUSINESS and Cornell University.

In the depths of winter, and with the economy at its darkest, 100 industry leaders came together to discuss the skills needed to build a stronger produce industry. This was yet another sign of the enduring optimism of our industry, of businesses that are built by people looking ahead, rather than dwelling on the past. Whether at the Symposium, the upcoming Produce Solutions Conference in Nashville, TN, or the Foodservice Conference & Exposition to be held July 24-26 in Monterey, CA, industry leaders continue to look for valuable education and relationship-building opportunities to spark ingenuity.

I am always thrilled to see member companies capitalizing on PMA's free resources, such as the crisis management and product recall guides and the complete consumer research reports highlighted monthly in this column. In the past two months alone, I have presented research to chronicle consumers' produce purchase behavior before and during an escalating recession, a chronicle that will build in the coming months. This research can be routinely and proactively mined by members seeking to understand consumer behavior.

Spring weather brings rain as much as it does warm, refreshing breezes, and the recession's unrest will undoubtedly stir more threatening days ahead. But like spying the season's first robin, this recent news of consumer's produce loyalty during the toughest financial times is a welcome sign.

Engage The Opportunities

That consumers report produce consumption remaining steady is not particularly surprising. People change eating habits slowly, if at all, and produce is not the kind of big-expense, high profile item — such as, say, lobster — that consumers are likely to focus on giving up for economic reasons.

Despite the trade's always-present interest in consumption, however, asking about consumption may be the wrong question for the industry in recessionary times.

After all, it is possible to maintain one's consumption by buying at less expensive venues, purchasing items on sale, switching from fresh-cut to do-it-yourself bulk produce and buying items that are less likely to be thrown out. So consumption, which is a measurement in pounds, can be flat or even increasing, while dollars spent can decrease.

The issue is not just “share of stomach,” it's also “share of wallet” — and that's a subject for PMA another day.

The challenge posed by frozen foods is substantial and growing. Quality has improved, and the ability exists to buy product when and where it's cheap and then pass on economies to the consumer. Add in the virtual elimination of the waste factor and one sees a formidable competitor.

On the other hand, frozen food has sustainability, carbon footprint and food security issues, along with the inherent limitations in frozen food merchandising. So fresh produce has its weapons, but one wonders if irradiation — spoken of mostly in the context of food safety or insect disinfestations — will not one day save fresh produce by extending shelf-life adequately to make fresh less likely to be wasted.

Although we have little doubt that many would use coupons if offered, we see only limited application in fresh produce. In packaged goods, a marketer can plan a retail price by building in a margin for marketing efforts, including coupons. In fresh produce, items are typically sold at a market price, so there is no opportunity to build in excess margin.

The few successful couponing schemes

Focus not on the tiny dip in demand you might have experienced. Concentrate instead on the percentage of the industry volume that you are not selling. In such a highly fragmented trade, that is almost always over 99 percent of the industry volume.

tied to fresh produce have usually been cross-merchandising programs, such as bananas and cereal, or salad dressing and salad vegetables, in which the cost of the coupon is paid for by the packaged product.

New technology, particularly store-based coupons, helps solve the other couponing problem: the lack of availability of specific brands in all outlets. For example, as big as the Chiquita brand may be, at any given time most supermarkets don't stock Chiquita bananas. So giving out coupons in mailers and newspapers is a recipe for consumer frustration. What's more, since stores typically only carry one brand at a time of most produce items, it would be nearly impossible for every chain to carry Chiquita bananas due to the simple fact that the brand itself doesn't have enough bananas. So couponing in produce will have to evolve as some kind of store-based promotion using new technology.

Couponing is designed to get price-sensitive consumers to buy one's product, without lowering the price for everyone. It has a place, but adds costs and complexity, and seems unlikely to dramatically transform the produce industry anytime soon.

As a partner in the Leadership Symposium, we were actively involved in getting industry leaders to Dallas (see our photo montage on page 16). Does the high attendance reflect optimism? Yes, but it may actually teach a more important lesson on how to

approach marketing and business during challenging economic times.

When we were urging people to attend the Symposium, we knew that many would decline to attend, pointing to the recession. So what? The program is limited to 100 industry executives. That is such a small percentage of the industry that macroeconomic conditions are only trivially important, compared to the actual efforts made to attract attendees.

This is true for most produce companies. The vast majority of companies in the industry have sales that are insignificant compared to the entire scope of the trade. So whether consumers buy more or less is typically not the determinant of success for individual players. That's a question of attitude, intelligence and hard work.

So we enthusiastically join with Bryan in saying that retreating into one's shell is extremely counter-productive. Read. Go to conferences. Visit customers. Think.

Focus not on the tiny dip in demand you might have experienced. Concentrate instead on the percentage of the industry volume that you are not selling. In such a highly fragmented trade, that is almost always over 99% of the industry volume.

All of a sudden, you will find your attitude changing. Instead of feeling a loss, you will realize how vast the opportunity is before you. Engage that opportunity and your road to success suddenly becomes clear.

Lesson For Hiring Companies: Give Young Talent Wings

From Jim Prevor's Perishable Pundit, Jan. 22, 2009



The most effective avocado displays are placed near other ingredients used to make guacamole, such as tomatoes.

We wrote this piece in San Francisco after we spent a little time visiting with Matthew Enny, a relatively new member of the produce industry who works for Duda Farm Fresh Foods. We gave him a pass to visit with us at the Fancy Food Show in San Francisco where Pundit sister publication, *DELI BUSINESS*, has long exhibited.

Matthew Enny is something of a poster boy for the PMA Foundation for Industry Talent (PMAFIT). He went through the Pack Family/PMA Career Pathways Fund, which brings promising students to the PMA convention each fall, eventually taking a position with Duda working in Salinas. To put it another way, he is a living, breathing example of what PMAFIT is trying to do — raise awareness of the produce industry among college students so that they will consider careers in produce.

Last year, Matt attended the Leadership Symposium in Dallas, which is produced by a partnership between PMAFIT, Cornell University and *PRODUCE BUSINESS* — and we wrote about the Symposium in previous posts. Last year, we also wrote about Matt's attempt to blog about the Symposium.

Matt came back this year to give the Symposium another try. In chatting with Matt we learned that, still working for Duda, he had relocated to San Francisco, which is how we came to suggest him broadening his horizons in the food industry by checking out the Fancy Food Show.

Yet in the fact that Matt is now living in San Francisco, we found an important lesson about the limitation of the PMAFIT effort and the type of change likely to be required if the industry is going to be successful at attracting and retaining quality employees.

Matt is a young, single man, and he requested permission to relocate to San Francisco because he wanted to have a more active social life than he found in Salinas.

He is proud to represent Duda and thinks the world of Bob Gray, Duda's CEO, and he didn't really mind Salinas and might well move back there one day. Although Matt spoke only of "a more active social life," we suspect he wouldn't mind finding a wife and then moving back to Salinas to settle down and raise a family.

Obviously Duda thinks highly of Matt, as the company was willing to make a deal with him. He is working from home, but will

spend one week a month back in Salinas. The arrangement is also facilitated because San Francisco is only a couple of hours from Salinas and, in a pinch, they call Matt at 6:00 AM and he will be in the office before 9:00 AM. And finally, Matt's job, which involves a lot of number-crunching, doesn't require him to be in the office.

Still, the important point is that an accommodation had to be made, and Duda realized this. This is in line with the column we wrote recently in the December issue of *PRODUCE BUSINESS*, titled "Attracting Talent Beyond The Abstract," in which we pointed out that PMAFIT's promotional efforts are to be encouraged but, in the end, in order to attract good candidates into the produce industry, we need to offer attractive jobs — and that is something only the private sector can accomplish.

This is not always easy to do. Some years ago, the Hunts Point Market switched its hours of operation to become a day market, and buyers were banned from the property before some specific morning hour. This was a response to the difficulty the market was experiencing in attracting quality employees — even the sons of owners didn't want to pursue a career that involved mostly night work.

The experiment failed and the market went back to being primarily a night market. This was for good reason. The very nature of the market, where customers buy product in the evening for early morning delivery to their stores and restaurants, demands night operations, and the produce quality is enhanced when it is exposed to the cool night air, not the heat of a New York summer.

So sometimes, operational realities make it essential that people work at certain times and in certain places.

Yet, this is not true all the time, and there is a danger for the industry if executives think that the PMA Foundation for Industry Talent can solve this problem all by itself. Companies need to think carefully if they are creating jobs appealing enough to compete with other industries.

One wonders if in the story of Matthew Enny there might be a pattern that could help a predominantly rural industry attract young workers who often have social and personal goals best served in urban areas.



Matthew Enny

One wonders if in the story of Matthew Enny there might be a pattern that could help a predominantly rural industry attract young workers who often have social and personal goals best served in urban areas.

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Front of the class

In mid-January, PRODUCE BUSINESS partnered with Cornell University and the Produce Marketing Association to present the Leadership Symposium, a unique conference where industry leaders gathered to hear four high-powered business writers talk about their areas of expertise. One-hundred industry professionals from all segments went to Dallas for two days to think "outside the box," network with one another and learn about new ways to approach their businesses.



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PRODUCE BUSINESS
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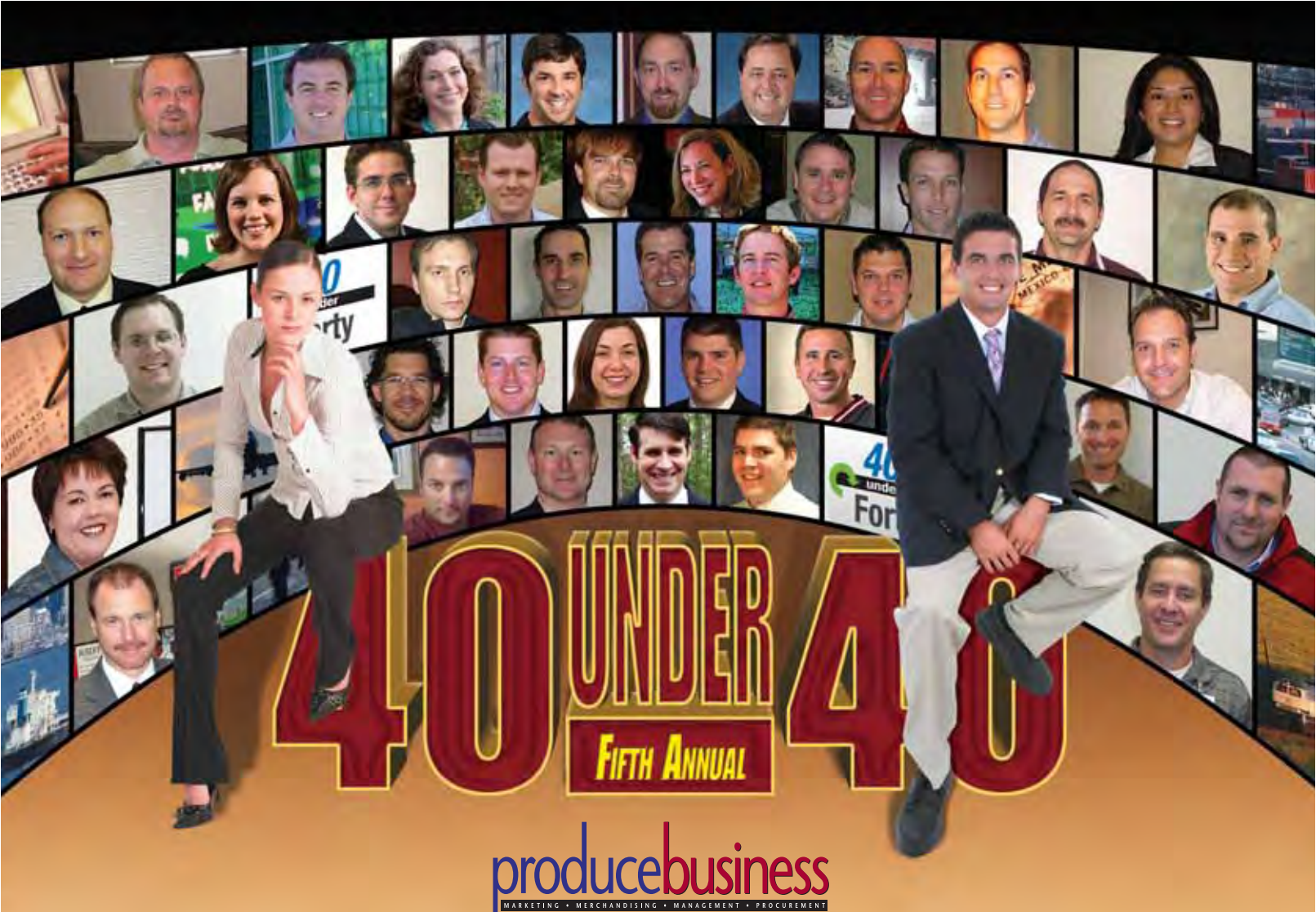
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Back of the Class



Manny Gomez and
Patty Salcedo
DRISCOLLS



PRODUCE BUSINESS is accepting nominations for its Fifth Annual 40 Under Forty Project, which recognizes the produce industry's top young leaders.

Honorees will be selected based on their professional accomplishments, demonstrated leadership and industry/community contributions. To be eligible, nominees must be under the age of 40 as of January 1 (People born after January 1, 1969).

To nominate someone, please fill out this form by March 1, 2009, and fax back to 561-994-1610.

Once nominated, the candidate will receive forms from us to fill out asking for detailed information. A candidate only needs to be nominated one time. Multiple nominations will have no bearing on selection.

ABOUT THE NOMINEE:

First Name _____ Last Name _____
 Approximate Age _____
 Company _____
 Position _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Postal Code _____
 Country _____
 Phone _____ Fax _____
 E-mail _____

In 100 words or less, describe why this person should be nominated:
 (You can use a separate sheet for this)

Nominee's Professional Achievements:

Nominee's Industry/Community/Charitable Activities:

ABOUT THE NOMINATOR:

First Name _____ Last Name _____
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Nominator information is for our use only and will not be shared with candidate or have a bearing on selection.

For more information email: info@producebusiness.com



The 21st Annual **MYSTERY SHOPPER REPORT**

As the economic downturn hits every corner of the United States, people are beginning to eat out less and head straight to their nearest grocery store. Pacing the aisles of the produce department, you'll find a cross-section of America — with many new customers who may not have been frequent produce shoppers — hoping to cross off items on their lists before pulling up to the cashier.

Here at *PRODUCE BUSINESS*, we want to be sure that produce department staff across the country is knowledgeably and helpfully engaging their customers. First of all, are they available when they are needed? Are they able to converse with shoppers when encountered? Do they know the difference between kale and Swiss chard? Would they be able to recommend a substitute for a rare Sierra Beauty apple? Basically, are they prepared for a barrage of questions that new home cooks might ask?

In an effort to better serve retailers and reveal the areas in which produce staff needs to improve, *PRODUCE BUSINESS* conducted our 22nd Annual Mystery Shopper Report. We grouped together a handful of our contributing and staff editors and sent them to various stores across the country between late December and early January. They were all armed with the same two recipes from epicurious.com: *Shrimp and Avocado Salad with Grapefruit Vinaigrette* and *Sweet Potatoes, Apples and Braising Greens*.

Our editors were instructed to ask simple questions and try to engage the employees in an effort to see how well each produce department is represented by its staff.

While our report is not meant to criticize any one store or chain, there are a few that could definitely take some pointers from our report, while others — as you'll see — set seriously high standards. Here's what we found.

SOUTHEAST REPORT

Store 1 - Knowledgeable About Avocados/Ginger Root

The first store I visited is part of a large regional chain known for its low prices. I approached the produce department and immediately noticed an employee stocking various leafy greens. With the recipe for *Shrimp and Avocado Salad with Grapefruit Vinaigrette* in hand, I quickly found conventional grapefruit and I picked up two limes.

While I found Mexican avocados prominently displayed in a wooden bin, I did not see any from California. I approached the employee, explained that I'm trying to gather ingredients for a salad recipe and asked him if he had any California avocados.

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"California avocados are seasonal," he replied. "They're best in the summer time, but Mexican avocados are available year-round."

Concerned about the taste, I asked him if using Mexican avocados would affect my recipe. He confessed it wouldn't make a major difference, but he considered California avocados the better-tasting fruit between the two, adding, "Personally, I like the Florida avocados because they're bigger and meatier than Mexican avocados. They're lighter in color, too."

I picked up two Mexican avocados that felt firm and asked the employee about peeling techniques. "They can be tricky," he said. "Slice it in half, separate the halves, strike the pit with a blade so the knife cuts into it and twist the knife away. That should take the pit out. Use a spoon to separate the skin from the pulp, then slice it as you wish."

I moved to the organic section and picked up a package of baby spinach. A few steps to the right, I picked up what looked like just over $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup of Brussels sprouts. At the time, I didn't realize the recipe preferred Radish sprouts over Brussels sprouts. Had I noticed earlier, I would have asked one of the employees to differentiate the two.

I had trouble locating the ginger root so I asked a second employee for assistance. She walked me to the ginger root.

"How can I tell if it's fresh?" I asked.

"The darker and harder the skin, the stronger the flavor," she replied.

"My recipe calls for finely-grated, peeled, fresh ginger," I noted. "What's the best way to do this?"

"I would suggest you use a cheese grater," she answered. "That should work just fine."

Both employees were helpful and quick to provide assistance. They were knowledgeable and answered my questions as expected.

Store 2 - Helpful Encouragement

The second store I visited is part of a popular regional chain that recently expanded its extensive presence in the Southeast to focus on natural and organic items. I entered the produce department with the recipe for Sweet Potatoes, Apples and Braising Greens. I saw two employees, one talking to a consumer and another stocking potatoes in the back.

I found several nicely displayed bins in the center of the department. I picked up four sweet potatoes and I asked the man stocking potatoes if he knew what braising greens were.

"What exactly are you looking for? Turnip? Collards?" he asked.

"Collards will do," I replied. "What about kale? Where can I find that?"

"Over here," he said, pointing to a display, marked for \$3.99 each.

"Doesn't that seem high to you?" I asked. "I don't usually eat leafy greens, but I'm making a dish for people who do."

"No, not really," he stated. "Kale is very good sautéed. You may like it."

I picked up one bunch of fresh kale and thanked him for his assistance. I turned to locate parsley and

MYSTERY SHOPPER RECIPES

Sweet Potatoes, Apples and Braising Greens

- 4 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut lengthwise into quarters, then cut crosswise into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch slices
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus 3 tablespoons melted
- 1 tablespoon fine sea salt
- 2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
- 3 medium baking apples, such as Sierra Beauty or Granny Smith, peeled, cored and cut into quarters
- 6 cups loosely packed braising greens such as kale, chard or collard greens, stems removed and torn into 2-inch strips
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup loosely packed fresh parsley leaves, coarsely chopped



PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 400° F.

On foil-lined baking sheet, toss potato slices with 3 tablespoons melted butter, 1 teaspoon salt and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper. Bake until cooked through and slightly caramelized, about 20 minutes. Keep warm.

In heavy medium skillet over moderate heat, melt 3 tablespoons butter. Add apples and sauté until tender and golden brown, about 15 minutes. Keep warm.

In heavy large pot over moderate heat, combine remaining 2 tablespoons butter and 3 tablespoons water. Add greens and sauté, stirring occasionally, until wilted, about five minutes. Lower heat to moderately low and add sweet potatoes and apples. Continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until warmed through, three to four minutes. Stir in parsley, remaining 2 teaspoons salt, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons pepper. Serve hot.

Source: Epicurious.com

Shrimp and Avocado Salad with Grapefruit Vinaigrette

FOR VINAIGRETTE:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh grapefruit juice
- 2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon finely grated peeled fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

FOR SALAD:

- 1 pink or red grapefruit
- 1 white grapefruit
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup hazelnuts, lightly toasted and any loose skins rubbed off
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 firm-ripe California avocados
- 1 teaspoon fresh lime juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound large shrimp (8 to 10), shelled and deveined
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 cups baby spinach (2 ounce)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup trimmed sprouts (preferably radish)



PREPARATION:

Make vinaigrette: Whisk together vinaigrette ingredients with salt and pepper to taste.

Assemble salad: Cut peel, including all white pith, from fruit with a sharp paring knife and cut segments free from membranes. Halve enough grapefruit segments to measure $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups (reserve any remaining segments for another use).

Coarsely chop hazelnuts. Melt butter in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over moderate heat until foam subsides, then cook hazelnuts with salt and pepper to taste, stirring, until a shade darker, about five minutes. Transfer nuts to paper towels to cool, reserving skillet.

Quarter avocados lengthwise, then pit and peel. Cut lengthwise into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices. Drizzle with lime juice and season with salt and pepper.

Pat shrimp dry and season with salt and pepper. Heat oil in skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then sauté shrimp, turning them, until golden and just cooked through, about three minutes.

Toss together spinach, half of grapefruit segments and half of vinaigrette with salt and pepper to taste.

Arrange avocados and remaining grapefruit on four plates and top with shrimp, salad and sprouts. Spoon remaining vinaigrette over salad and sprinkle with nuts.

Source: Epicurious.com

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quickly found it. By now, the younger employee was done talking with his customer, so I asked him about the last produce item on my list.

"Do you have Sierra Beauty apples?" I inquired.

"I don't think so, but I'll ask," he said, walking over to the first employee who was helping me earlier.

"No, we don't," he said, "but the Granny Smiths are good this time of year."

"Great," I replied. "I'll buy some. Thanks."

The employee at this store was helpful, but I wished he would have offered a less expensive substitution item, such as loose braising greens, for the high-priced kale.

Store 3 - Friendly Employees

The third store I visited is part of a regional chain of specialty markets with a European feel. The open-air market felt immediately inviting as I approached the produce department just to the right of the entrance. Before I had a chance to remove my recipe for Shrimp and Avocado Salad with Grapefruit Vinaigrette from my purse, an older female employee asked me if there was anything I needed.

"Yes, I'm looking for pink or red grapefruit for a salad recipe. What's the difference between the two?"

"Rio Star grapefruit from Texas is very sweet and has a nice, red flesh to it," she replied. "It's very juicy and should go nicely in a salad."

"I'll go with that," I said, picking up one piece of fruit marked "Grown in Texas" and priced two for \$3.

I soon located several bins full of nuts displayed in

bulk. I found one with toasted hazelnuts, filled a small plastic bag and added it to my basket.

As I moved through the department, I picked up a lime, what looked like two cups' worth of baby spinach and two Mexican avocados.

Realizing I overlooked the line "preferably radish" while reading the recipe at the first store, I decided to ask the produce clerk if Brussels sprouts would work.

"I showed him the recipe and asked how many bunches of greens I should buy to get six cups. He did the math of converting ounces to cups and figured that two bunches would do nicely."

"I think so. They are right over there," she replied, pointing to a semi-hidden display of Brussels sprouts.

"Thanks, but do you have Radish sprouts?"

"Sometimes we do," she said, scratching her head.

"I think all we have are Daikon sprouts. They're pretty spicy and go well in salads."

Both employees were approachable, knowledgeable and friendly. Both offered good information and I will mostly likely return to the store in the future.

NEW ENGLAND REPORT Store 1 - Better Deal Than Organics

It was a busy Sunday at this large supermarket known for its organic, natural and local offerings. In the middle of the produce section, I found two staff members stocking items. Referring to my recipe for Shrimp and Avocado Salad with Grapefruit Vinaigrette, I approached the two employees asking, "I have to make this salad for a party, but I don't like grapefruit," I said. "Is there something else I can use?"

One of the men walked me to a display of citrus. "Well, our grapefruits are really sweet. You might like them," he said. I wrinkled my nose. "How about Cara Cara oranges?" he suggested. "They're pink inside, so they look like grapefruit."

"That might work," I said. I picked out two Cara Caras, which later rung up as Navels, and a Navel orange to stand in for white grapefruit.

I returned a minute later. "Do you have any bags of spinach that are smaller than this?" I asked him, holding up a 5-ounce bag of organic baby spinach.

"No," he replied. "Nothing smaller, but those over there are a better deal," he added, pointing to some 6-ounce bags of conventional baby spinach.

"But that's not organic," I pointed out. He agreed,



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Finally, I inquired about Radish sprouts. The store had some, and I asked the produce employee who I spoke with earlier what they tasted like. "They're like radishes, but milder," he explained, and he opened the box so we could smell them. The scent wasn't much of an indication, but I thanked him and added them to my cart.

Store 2 - Pleasant Talk About Ripeness

At this small supermarket, part of a local upscale chain, the first thing I saw when I walked through the doors was a display of ruby and white grapefruits, which was handy since I was shopping for Shrimp and Avocado Salad with Grapefruit Vinaigrette.

"Hi," I said to a man in a green apron. "I have to get a pink or red grapefruit and a white grapefruit. How can I tell what it looks like inside?"

"These are reddish inside and these are whitish inside," he said, holding up two. "See, the skin on this one is darker."

"So you can tell by the skin?"

"Well, I can," he smiled.

"I need some avocados, too, from California," I said, holding up my list. It was late December, and the sign said they're all from Mexico.

"This is all we have," he said.

"What's the difference?" I asked.

"Well, where it's from."

"Okay. How can I tell which ones are good?"

"You need it for tonight?" I nodded. "So you want

it to be ripe? You can tell by feeling them. And the darker ones are riper than the lighter ones." Well, he's half right, I thought.

"I also need some Radish sprouts." We walked over to the sprouts and I spotted them tucked in among the others, but kept quiet.

"I can't say I've ever heard of those," he said. I asked for a substitute. After giving it some thought, he told me that Alfalfa sprouts are popular.

We discussed the pros and cons of fresh lime juice versus bottled and settled on a fresh lime, for better flavor and because I only needed a little. Then I asked where I could find toasted hazelnuts. We checked out the display of nuts and dried fruit with no luck. Then he directed me to the baking aisle. We exchanged a pleasant "thank you" and "you're welcome," and I was on my way.

Store 3 - Lack Of Interest

At this independent supermarket known for its well-priced, high-quality produce, I quickly spotted a young man stocking bananas. "Hi. Can you help me?" I asked. He nodded, and I held up my recipe for Sweet Potatoes, Apples and Braising Greens. "What's the difference between kale, chard and collard greens?" I inquired. He looked confused for a moment and pointed to another man. I began to suspect he didn't speak English.

I showed the second man my list and asked the same question.

"Over there," he said, directing me to the kale

and collard greens.

"But what are they?" I asked. He shrugged. "Can anyone else help me?"

"Just a minute," he said, disappearing into the back. About five minutes later, he came back out. "He's coming," he said. I waited a little longer and a third worker arrived to help me.

I asked my question and he lead me to the kale and collards. "But what do they taste like?" I persisted.

"I don't know," he said with a smile. He had also never heard of chard, which was displayed just a few feet away.

"One more question," I said. "Have you ever heard of these apples?" I held up my list and pointed to Sierra Beauty.

"No," he replied. "But we have Granny Smith."

Of all the employees I encountered on this assignment, the staff here seemed to have the least knowledge and interest in helping customers, but I know I'll be back, because the produce looked beautiful.

MID-ATLANTIC REPORT

Store 1 - Educational Experience

My first stop was at a very large Northeast chain owned by a national company. The store I visited is in the suburbs of Philadelphia. I went in with very low expectations because I have never found the quality of its produce to be outstanding.

It was a busy, late Sunday morning and the store was packed with many shoppers stocking up for the afternoon's football game. Three employees were



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hurriedly re-stocking displays, and as I paused to debate whom I should approach, all three disappeared into the backroom. After about two minutes, one employee reappeared, briskly walking by me and offering a barely audible, "Hiya." I pursued him and produced the Shrimp and Avocado Salad recipe asking for assistance. My first question was about how many grapefruits I needed to produce a ¼-cup of juice. Without hesitation, he replied one or two should do it, depending on how juicy they are, and advised me to buy two just to be safe. I then asked the same for the lime juice. He suggested one lime would be sufficient for two teaspoons of juice, and offered the additional advice of rolling the lime with soft pressure on a cutting board or microwaving it for 10 seconds before cutting it to help extract the juice.

I then asked where the red and white grapefruits were and noted I needed both for the salad. He showed me the red grapefruits and helped me select one. He told me the store didn't have any white grapefruits. He explained white grapefruits are very hard to come by these days since everybody wants the pink or red and likened it to trying to find a seeded watermelon. He took a look at the recipe and suggested I use another citrus product, such as a Navel orange, to substitute for the white grapefruit.

I asked about the fresh ginger, noting I didn't know what it was. He walked me to the display, asked how much the recipe called for, selected a root and broke a small piece off so I could smell it. He then

explained how I could use a cheese grater to grate it. Additionally, he mentioned the piece of ginger would only cost about 10¢ and then asked what else the recipe called for.

"Throughout our entire exchange, the employee was very pleasant and friendly and I had the feeling he enjoyed helping me. Besides just finding me what I needed, he educated me about the products."

He helped me select two ripe California avocados and explained how to select for ripeness. He then walked me to the bagged salad and lettuce display and showed me the options available in baby spinach. Lastly, I asked about the sprouts and he took me to a small display, noting that they did not have any

Radish sprouts. Instead, he suggested broccoli as a good substitution, as it is less peppery than some of the other sprouts.

Throughout our entire exchange, he was very pleasant and friendly and I had the feeling he enjoyed helping me. Besides just finding me what I needed, he educated me about the products, especially how to select and use them. As I thanked him for his help he offered, "For a small fee, I'll come to your house and cook it," and laughed. I left the department with a jovial feeling and a new impression of the store. Perhaps I'll give them the benefit of the doubt in my future shopping trips.

Store 2 - Professional Orientation

My second stop was to a very upscale independent store in a highly affluent neighborhood. Many of its patrons are private chefs or foodies. I visited on a weekday morning when the store was quiet.

When I entered the beautifully stocked produce department, I didn't see anyone on the floor. I walked around for five minutes browsing the aisles and still didn't see anyone, so I went in search of an employee. In the next aisle over, I found a younger gentleman working with fresh juices and asked him where I could get some help. He replied he could help and walked with me back to the produce department.

I produced the Sweet Potatoes, Apples and Braising Greens recipe and asked for the apple varieties listed. He correctly pointed out the Granny Smith

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apples, but didn't know what the Sierra Beauty variety was and asked me to wait while he went to check. A few minutes later, he returned and told me he didn't have any Sierras. When I asked what I could substitute for it, he asked me to wait again and left to consult the unknown source.

He returned with the produce manager who then took over. He explained he didn't have the Sierra variety and unfortunately, he didn't know much about its taste profile. He mentioned remembering seeing it in his nursery book and promised he'd make some calls and find out for the next time. When I told him not to worry about it, he explained how he expected others to come in with the same or similar recipe and he would need to be more prepared. I asked him what suggestion he had for the recipe. We seemed at an impasse until I offered the thought of maybe using a contrasting flavor, then he recommended the Gala or Honey Crisp.

I asked him about the different sweet potatoes, noting they had a display of yams, as well as a display of yellow sweet potatoes. He looked at the recipe and suggested I use the yams, saying they are most commonly thought of as sweet potatoes. I asked about the greens and he walked me to a display of kale, Swiss chard and collards. When I asked, he explained the difference. I said I'd probably take the chard since I liked sweeter things, but he suggested using the kale to offset the sweetness of the apples and sweet potatoes. When I agreed, he handed me a bunch. When I balked at the amount, he explained how I should store it and mentioned I could use it for up to a week if stored well.

Lastly, I asked about the parsley and mentioned being confused about seeing different types of herbs that looked like parsley. He explained the difference in taste and texture between the curly parsley and Italian parsley and even mentioned how cilantro is actually a type of parsley. He recommended using the Italian parsley for this recipe and selected a nice bunch for me. Again, I balked at the amount and again he explained how to properly store it for use up to a week. I thanked him and he nodded his head and disappeared.

My overall feeling of the visit was more that of having conferred with another industry member, someone talking very matter-of-factly about the items. Perhaps its experience with its chef clientele lends them toward having a more profession-oriented service.

Store 3 - Awkward Silence

My last stop was to a small local chain priding itself on freshness and quality. I went late afternoon on a weekday. After walking through the department, I spied someone re-stocking the bagged lettuce and approached, armed with the Shrimp and Avocado Salad recipe.

My first question was if he could help me figure out how many fresh limes I needed for two teaspoons of lime juice. He recommended I buy the squeeze bottle of lime juice instead and walked me to the display. When I proceeded to ask about the


grapefruit juice, he said the manager could probably help me better and pointed out another man stocking on the wet rack. I was left on my own to approach the manager as the gentleman hurried back to the bagged salad section.

I explained about the recipe to the manager and asked him how many fresh grapefruits would make $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. He looked a bit startled and walked with me over to the grapefruits. After a few moments of pause and staring at the grapefruits, he suggested I buy six. I asked him about the white grapefruit and he replied they didn't have any without any further explanation. I asked about what he thought I could use as a substitute and he shrugged his shoulders and said he didn't

really know.

The manager looked so uncomfortable that I felt the overwhelming urge to just get out of there and forget about it. I held my breath and asked about the ginger. He walked with me to the ginger display. I told him I needed $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon and he pulled out a huge ginger root and put it on the scale. He broke about half of it off and then continued to fiddle with it on the scale, in what seemed like an effort to buy himself some time to think. Finally, he handed me a huge piece, and said it was what I needed.

I then asked him about the sprouts and he took me back to the bagged lettuce and pointed out bean sprouts. He said they didn't have any of the sprouts I



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was looking for and apologized. At that point, he looked at my cart and said he thought the ginger was more than I needed and took the piece out again. He walked back over to the ginger display and took a much smaller piece and handed it to me.

I then asked him about the California avocados and he led me to the display. He picked up a Florida avocado and told me the California ones weren't ripe and the Florida ones would be better for me to use. He selected two and handed them to me.

Overall, the conversation was very uncomfortable, and although he was friendly, I felt pity for the manager who seemed startled and unprepared for the questions. While he answered most of the questions — sometimes in excessive quantity — his obvious lack of experience and familiarity in interacting with customers resulted in a painful silence surrounding each and every question. If I would have been shopping on my own, I would have given up and left the department after the first question.

MID-WEST REPORT

Store 1 - Clueless About Greens

It was three days before Christmas when I strolled into one of the five large chain stores in a large metropolitan area. This particular store is arguably the city's largest and most upscale supermarket. Not surprisingly, I was greeted by an impressive produce department. Immediately, I began scanning the area to see if anyone was actively tending to it. I soon

noticed a man wearing managerial attire who appeared to be taking inventory.

Doing my best to appear like any other harried holiday shopper, I began filling a cart with my usual weekly produce buys before making my move. Pulling out a recipe for Sweet Potatoes, Apples and Braising Greens, I casually meandered past the produce manager. "Oh! Can I ask you a question?" I blurted out. "This recipe calls for Sierra Beauty or Granny Smith apples. I see the Granny Smiths over there, but do you have any Sierra Beauty?" He does not, he politely tells me. "Do you know what they are?" I continued, screwing up my face in a perplexed look. "I've never even heard of them." Shaking his head, he conceded that he didn't know either. I thanked him and began making my way to the display of Granny Smiths. Apparently seeking to be more helpful, he called out to me, informing me that Granny Smiths are a tart apple.

After I carefully selected the three medium apples, four medium sweet potatoes and fresh parsley called for by the recipe, I decided it was time to ask about braising greens. This time, I posed my question to a young man busily stocking a nearby display of carrots. According to the recipe, I can use collard greens, kale or chard, I explained. "What's the difference between the three?" I asked. "Do they taste different?" He quickly confessed that he had no idea, but offered to ask his manager. Disappearing into the back, he emerged a couple minutes later, only to report that

his manager didn't know anything about them either. Much like his superior, the stock boy made the effort to be more helpful, however, telling me the greens I am seeking are also available pre-washed and bagged in the organic section.

"The conversation was very uncomfortable, and although he was friendly, I felt pity for the manager who seemed startled and unprepared for the questions."

Store 2 - Spanish Only Here

Just after New Year's, I headed to my next destination, a small local chain store known for its extensive produce department and large selection of multicultural products. Upon entering, I noticed two employees hard at work stocking the store's produce department. Once again, I posed as someone shopping for ingredients for the same sweet potato recipe. Unfortunately, I quickly discovered that a language barrier

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Reader Service # 39

made it extremely difficult to be a clueless shopper at this particular store. The first man I approached didn't seem to understand that I was looking for a kind of apple the store didn't stock. Hearing the word "apple," he merely pointed me in the direction of the apple section, which I had already scoured for the elusive Sierra Beauty.

I then approached the second stocker, and asked about the difference between the three kinds of braising greens. When it became obvious he didn't understand me either, I called over my Spanish-speaking husband who tagged along for the ride. Given the

opportunity to converse in his native tongue, the stocker politely replied that Swiss chard and collard greens are equal.

Store 3 - Not Very Fruitful

The next day, I drove to an established, independent produce store. This time, I was shopping for a different recipe, Shrimp and Avocado Salad with Grapefruit Vinaigrette. The store owner was nowhere to be found, so we made our way to the grapefruit display where a blonde woman was stocking apples nearby. Posing as someone not too familiar with pro-

duce, I loudly pondered what makes white grapefruit different from pink. The pink variety is sweeter, the woman informed me. While I had her attention, I asked if we could possibly substitute a different kind of citrus because my mother can't eat grapefruit due to certain medications. Specifically, I asked if oranges would be all right. "Sure," the woman replied. "I would think so."

Unfortunately, the latter part of my shopping experience was not as fruitful as the first. Coming up dry in my search for spinach, I asked for assistance finding it, only to learn that the store is completely

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sold out. Likewise, when all I can find is an empty avocado box, I was told those are all gone, too. All in all, the store boasted the most knowledgeable staff, but came up short in terms of stock.

WESTERN REPORT

Store 1 - Mathematically Inclined

This regional chain caters to an upscale and gourmet clientele, and I was hoping that I could find all of the ingredients I needed for my two recipes. I wandered in as a non-foodie looking for aid, took note of the store's immaculate produce displays and was immediately approached by a friendly produce department employee. I offered him the printout of the recipes and he got right to work. He didn't have the Sierra Beauty apples I was looking for, but he did have Granny Smith. To test him, I showed him the recipe and asked how many bunches of greens I should buy to get six cups. He did the math of converting ounces to cups and figured that two bunches would do nicely.

I was hoping for a bag of pre-washed braising greens, but I couldn't find one. When I inquired about Radish sprouts for my salad, the employee looked puzzled, admitting had never heard of them before. To his benefit, he showed me the store's selection of sprouts, which included Alfalfa and Broccoli, and offered to go look in the back for this item.

The hazelnuts I needed weren't located in his department, so he found someone else to show me where they were. I left satisfied and only slightly vexed that I had to go elsewhere for the elusive Radish sprouts.

Store 2 - Honest Escort

When I visited the second store, a national chain of high-end grocery stores, I anticipated finding everything I needed. The produce department boasts a huge selection, with beautiful artsy displays, but it can be a bit overwhelming. An employee asked me right away if I needed help. The produce assistant walked me all around the department, helping me find everything I needed. I really put him through the paces, but he had solid product knowledge.

The employee showed me hazelnuts in a 6-ounce clamshell and he also suggested that I could buy a specific quantity in the bulk aisle. I also told him I wanted to buy just two ounces of baby spinach. Upon hearing my request, he escorted me to the bulk baby greens section and went so far as to weigh my greens for me. This was the only store that had any type of Radish sprout, and they actually had two: Spicy and Daikon. When I inquired as to which would serve my recipe better, he said he hadn't tasted them, so he couldn't give me any guidance.

I walked out pleased that I was able to procure all that I needed and had a pleasant shopping experience overall.

Store 3 - Anguished Language

The third, family-owned test store was pretty much in line with my expectations that it would have the standard ingredients I needed such as ginger,

limes and spinach. The store caters to Middle-Eastern and Eastern European communities and offers some exotic items. However, the majority of the produce department looked picked over, and many of the fruits and vegetables seemed dirty. To be fair, it was early in the day and employees were in the middle of restocking the shelves.

While there was someone there to assist me, I had to ask for help. However, the employee didn't seem to speak English that well, and we had trouble communicating. When I asked for Radish sprouts, he showed me every radish in the store, but he didn't seem to understand that people eat Radish sprouts. After our trip around the produce department, I got the feeling that he was overwhelmed and just wished I would leave. I detected a note of anguish in the man's eyes, but I persisted with a request for hazelnuts. He immediately said no, the store did not carry them, but I think the problem was actually that he didn't know what they were, despite the fact that the entire front of the store was stacked with European hazelnut chocolates and cakes.

I managed to find the hazelnuts and the rest of the ingredients myself. While I left a bit frustrated with the language barrier, I was pleased with the prices and exotic offerings. I just wouldn't go back expecting a great deal of assistance.

NORTHWEST REPORT

Store 1 - Friendly Advocate

On a Saturday morning, I wheeled my cart into the department of a large, remodeled store in a busy, suburban location. I was delighted to see a middle-aged woman working the displays and figured she would be a great person to answer my questions. She toured me all over the department to find what I needed and chatted about the recipes for the holiday season. She suggested I think about using bulk, fresh, loose braising greens when I expressed concern about a bunch of colored kale priced at \$3.99. That was a great substitution referral.

While she was very comfortable with the cooking characteristics of apple varieties, her best guess on the juice yield of a large lime was a tablespoon, and her opinion was that sweet potatoes and yams have the same flavor and are interchangeable in any cooking method. This staffer was patient with amateur questions, willing to be drawn away from her assigned task and was a friendly advocate for the store.

Store 2 - Ten-Minute Conversation

This Northwest chain operates large conventional grocery stores and is known for its value pricing and large selection. Walking into the store, the layout, presentation and lighting made it appear quite upscale. I shopped this store midafternoon on the Sunday before New Year's. It was busy with shoppers, but a bit light on availability of help in the produce department. I wandered around the large, clean department looking lost and unsure.

Finally, I spotted a man wearing an apron, but also a winter jacket coming through the swinging doors from the prep room. When I called out to him, he

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came right over and asked if he could help. I told him I had been assigned a couple of recipes for a party, but I wasn't much of a cook and needed help. He said he had to leave, but to wait a moment there and he would find someone to help me. In less than a minute, he was back with the produce manager for the shift. He thanked me for my patience and left.

The produce manager was very helpful and knew every product in the department, but not much about its preparation. He was also stumped by the lime juice question, but came in at the other end of the range, predicting ½ cup of juice per lime. He also couldn't help with the hazelnuts, since this store stocks them in the baking aisle.

He was very helpful with one product. When I asked him how much fresh ginger to buy to get a ¼ teaspoon, he laughed and said, "Not very much, a small knob will do it easily, but there are many other uses for fresh ginger, and it's easy to store in your freezer." He gave me several other ways to use fresh ginger so I put a good-sized piece in my basket. He easily spent 10 minutes with me, making sure I could find everything else I needed.

Store 3 - "A" For Effort

On a Tuesday afternoon, I arrived at a smaller, upscale store in a popular urban/suburban neighborhood with a reputation for great service and an eclectic product mix. I was pretty sure it would be impossible to stump them, and was concerned that our recipes would be too simple to fully test them.

When I walked in, I noticed three associates working on the floor of a fairly small department. I headed over to the youngest-looking team member, showed him my recipes and started asking questions. Just about 20 years old, this employee worked very hard to get my answers, even if he didn't know much about food or cooking beyond the ability to locate everything on my list.

The salad called for trimmed sprouts, preferably Radish. He lead me to the sprout section and said, "I know we've had them before, but I'm not seeing them today," as he pulled out and checked every package, finally pointing out the row of Daikon sprouts. I asked him if he'd ever tried them and what they tasted like? He responded, "I think they are kind of bitter," then cut me a slice.

He was just as responsive and helpful when answering my questions about removing the skins from hazelnuts. He escorted me to the bulk section and found the nuts. "I don't know how to get the skins off, but I'll find someone who does," he said. He came back twice to make sure I was still there because he was having trouble getting the answer. Finally, another customer in the area spoke up and explained how he did it. We both peppered the man with questions until the produce staffer was sure he understood, and then told the customer, "We should hire you!"

In every case, the produce staffers I spoke with were generous with their time, clearly enjoyed interacting with customers and tried hard to satisfy my needs for information.

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Wholesalers Find Ways To Make It Work

Wholesalers survive in an uncertain economy by tightening their reigns, changing their product offerings, increasing marketing tactics and continuing to put customers first.

BY DUANE CRAIG

While the U.S. economy struggles through the current economic challenges, it is apparent to some in the wholesale sector that business as usual will not necessarily equal business survival.

Across the sector, business owners and managers are seeing softer pricing, increases in the sales of lower-cost staples, reductions in volume orders and slower payment by account holders. But the net effects of those situations are being partially offset by increased efforts to wring more value out of operations.

One company making a concerted effort to

extend value to its customers is Los Angeles, CA-based Coast Produce Co., which created the Farmer Select program to offer its customers a way to connect with the end user. Marketing manager, Emily Fragoso, explains the year-round program tries to feature a new item and highlight its shipper each month. "While we are a wholesale distributor, we are also experts in procurement, merchandising and marketing. We always think of the end user. With Farmer Select, it's important to show the field-to-fork transition and create a more personal relationship with our food, especially now, as people are going out to eat less and dwelling more."

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Produce LLC, in Cheshire, CT, says as prices move to higher points, holding market highs for extended periods is becoming more difficult.

Marketing and new business development manager for Indianapolis, IN-based Indianapolis Fruit Co. Inc., Shane Towne, is seeing more staples going out the door. As part of its effort to help customers find new opportunities in challenging times, his company published a paper outlining six steps they can take to position themselves competitively and grow their businesses. That includes sticking to the basics by focusing on key staples offered in bulk and featuring them on a rotating basis. Towne names potatoes, apples, onions and even greens for salads as some of those key staples.

"They are generally going more to the basics like potatoes and carrots," agrees Steven Piazza, president of Community-Suffolk Inc., headquartered in Everett, MA. "I think the low-volume, high-priced items are going to have to start playing second fiddle to items that you can buy, such as a pound of carrots and a pound of potatoes, and feed a family. A lot of the restaurants are actually shopping the markets first to see what items they can put on a plate to provide value and keep their entrée cost down. Instead of always having asparagus, if they can get a

good deal on zucchini, they will just use that for a week. When white potatoes are cheap and red potatoes are expensive, they will put mashed potatoes or roasted potatoes on the menu instead."

"People are worried about their incomes," adds Pete Carcione, president of South San Francisco, CA-based Carcione's Fresh Produce Co. Inc. "One of their family members might lose their job, so they are watching what they are spending and are buying their produce to bring home and

**"Now is our chance
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**—Shane Towne
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Amplifying Value

Through it all, wholesalers are watching their business practices closely and adjusting as the times dictate. "Our gross profit margin as a percent has dropped over the past year, simply because the prices have gone up significantly," reveals Ron Carkoski, president and CEO of Four Seasons Produce Inc., based in Ephrata, PA. "We have experienced at least a \$2 per case increase in costs over the past year. The margin that we are able to get on that as a percent has decreased. Our dollars are about the same. We haven't added fees, since we have decided that it's not something we want to do, but we are definitely passing costs along, while also making sure we keep things transparent."

Everett, MA-based Community-Suffolk Inc. is doing something different as well. President Steven Piazza explains, "We are actually staggering our help a little bit so we can extend our hours without increasing costs. That's just so we can continue being better buyers and sellers, while providing the value that the restaurants and other cus-

tomers are looking for."

Emily Fragoso, marketing manager for Coast Produce Co. Inc., located in Los Angeles, CA, points out that diversification is key. "We are paying attention to diversifying the businesses that we service to make sure we don't have all of our eggs in one basket," she declares. "How we do that may mean being in contact with our customers, and making sure that we are providing great service to them, but it could also be thinking from the point of view of our 5-year plan. We ask questions like, 'What can we do differently?' and 'What new areas of business can bring new areas of revenue?'"

"We have been doing really well since about mid-September," admits Brendan Comito, chief operations officer for Capital City Fruit Co. Inc. "Some of that may be because we kind of saw this coming months ago and really tightened our belts and did some things to prepare starting last year. I think that part of the reason we are sitting really well is because we didn't wait until it was right in our face to make some

changes. We just figured out every way that we could to cut costs and make things as efficient as possible. There were just a lot of little things that we did, but they all add up."

Carkoski notes the importance of flexibility and preparation. "I know something for sure, and that is that our business model is changing and if we hadn't had the vision to be prepared to make it, and be ready for that, we would be playing catch-up right now," he says.

"That is something for everybody to look at right now, the difference between wholesaler and distributor and what it truly means, and what it requires you to be able to do in terms of adding value to the supply chain and be the business solution for consumers," continues Carcione. "That is a crucial part that has to be examined moving forward. You can try to be all things to all people, like we tried to do here in the distant past, but you soon learn you will fail. Rather, we focus on what we do well and what can we do better for our customers. That is our winning formula."

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Carkoski. "It is especially apparent right now in the foodservice sector. Also, there aren't the efficiencies of delivery there have been in the past. Because some of the businesses are down, we are going with fewer cases to those customers and that reduces the efficiency of the delivery and creates a higher cost for that delivery."

"We just have to say no," agrees Grizaffe, admitting that he is experiencing more people asking for extended credit terms. "We understand their business is slow, but we have bills, too."

Community-Suffolk's Piazza sees both sides of the coin. "The credit problems have not bothered us, but I wouldn't want to be starting out in the produce business right

Coast to Coast's Kulpik says his long-term customer base has stayed current, but in the industry overall, he says there is "definitely a concern."

Carcione of Carcione's Fresh Produce adds that he has seen some credit issues, but when compared to the 70s, he says it's nothing like that, when people would just run out.

STAYING ALIVE

As with any business, those in the wholesale produce sector that aren't positioned well for challenging economic times

may not make it. "I don't know what the long-term consequences will be, but certainly the industry is not immune," reveals Vena. "But because of the business we are in, and where we are located, I feel like we have an opportunity to make the best of it. I think that having grown up in this industry, one of the philosophies that was passed down from generation to generation is that during tough economic times, in a terminal market, you can always make a living, and I believe that."

"I think that if you don't change with the times and the conditions of the times we are

"Many of the consumers in the restaurant business depend on cash flow, so it's a question of how long they can go if people stay home."

**— John Vena
John Vena Inc.**

now," he asserts. "Transportation costs have come down somewhat, but the biggest change that we are seeing is the extension of time on credit. The economy is taking a lot of cash out of the system. We try to abide by the produce industry rules and get all of our bills within 25 to 28 days. Fortunately for us, we have been around 70 years and we have great relationships with our banks."

"When I wrap up 2008, I am going to be able to say that overall, it really wasn't a bad year, but it ended badly," admits John Vena's Vena. "Sales in November and December were really off, partly because of the way the holidays fell. I think that it really has to do with a slowdown in the industry. We are particularly concerned about restaurants. Many of the customers in the restaurant business depend on cash flow, so it's a question of how long they can go if people stay home. We saw a couple close in December and we have heard more will close. We are watching very closely in the food service business, and we feel we may need to tighten our credit terms a little bit with these customers."

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experiencing right now, you could be in serious trouble," adds Piazza.

Carkoski, of Four Seasons, worries about the effects of the economy on food-safety. "As you start addressing the issues of the industry and the systems that have to be put into place to assure customers and suppliers that you are working in a food-safe environment, I can't help but think that there will be wholesalers that will end up making the decision not to do any of that," he states. "Not because they don't believe in it, but because the profitability of their business doesn't allow that, so they will make a decision to sell or take their business in a different direction."

"I'd say that these times separate the good from the excellent distribution and wholesale companies, but it also raises a red flag for those wholesale and distribution companies that can't change," adds Indianapolis Fruit's Towne's, who believes the spiraling economy will act as a type of natural selection. "If you are not striving to be better than your competition, and you are not staying two to three steps ahead, you are not going to be around long anyway."

FINDING THE OPPORTUNITIES

People often say that some will find opportunities regardless of the economic

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"The good news is that they do have to eat and produce provides more nutrition per calorie than most foods do, so people are still being drawn to produce."

**— Brendan Comito
Capital City Fruit Co. Inc.**

picture. For those in the wholesale produce business, those opportunities have most recently come in the form of refining business practices.

"Our opportunities have been in our marketing strategies and looking at different ways of improving that," says Coast Produce's Fragoso. "Right now, there is a need for reconnection. Consumers really want to find places where they can embrace their communities. Our Farmers Select program answers those kinds of needs, and our POS material stresses the fact that these products are going from one family to another."

For Kulpik of Coast to Coast, new opportunities continue to develop, but one in particular is adding value simply by being there at the right time. "It seems as if a lot of retailers today are even more conscious of their inventory, so being a local distributor allows us the opportunity to make daily deliveries to chain stores," he says.

Towne views the current economic situation as a chance to perfect his operation. "Now is our chance to really fine-tune our distribution and customer service practices and find the real value," he expresses. One of the things his company is offering to its customers is passive or active demos in order to help boost impulse sales, which tend to wane under negative economic conditions. He is also seeing a lot of his retail customers refocusing their efforts in the areas of customer service, and offering variety that is backed up by a "perfect mix of volume, bulk opportunities and specials."

For others, the opportunities are tied to the market segments they serve and the sizes of those segments. "The little guy can buy from the wholesalers, and we can

make a fair profit on it and mark it up nicely and still compete with the big guy," explains Carcione. "That's why all the little guys do well. Being able to buy on the wholesale produce market is also a real plus. The buyers today are skilled, and they walk the market and they can see what they are buying and they can taste it before they buy it."

Community-Suffolk's Piazza agrees that the markets are advantageous. "There are a lot of good, experienced, independent grocers here that are used to buying from the

market, and I think that in times like this, they are more flexible than the chains and they will react to the situation better," he states. "That, in turn, provides opportunities for them, which then provides opportunities for us. These stores have local expertise that the management of the chains doesn't understand. If you have three or four stores, you probably have managers that have been in those stores for awhile. You and your children have worked in those stores for some time, so you know what people want." **pb**



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Transportation Logistics Face Challenges

As the economy takes its toll, the trucking industry finds ways to remain relevant.

BY LISA LIEBERMAN

In the face of the economic downturn and fluctuating gas prices, many changes are taking place in the transportation industry.

The good news is that there appears to be more truck drivers available to work. The bad news, though, is that there may be fewer trucks for these drivers to operate since so many trucking companies have gone out of business in the past year. Also, there may not be as much freight to haul as there once was, since consumers — some industry experts are saying — are buying less produce.

According to Charlie Dominguez, vice president of Latin American sales for the Crowley American Transport Inc., based in Doral, FL, “A year ago, there was a shortage of drivers, so you had to scramble to cover your deliveries — especially perishables — and you had to pay somewhat of a premium. Today, we have ample availability of drivers, but that may change again once the economy wakes up.”

In terms of actual produce sales, Dominguez, along with other produce industry experts, say sales are relatively stable. At the same time, though, very few people believe produce is com-

pletely recession proof.

Paul Kazan, president of the Bronx, NY-based Target Interstate Systems Inc., notices the decline in business but tries to look on the bright side. “People still have to eat, so the produce industry is not necessarily as devastated as other industries, but there’s less volume than there was before. Many produce purchases are impulse buys,” he adds. “People may have lettuce, tomatoes and celery as staples, but they might think twice about anything else they put in their salad bowl.”

Target Interstate Systems, which runs about a 50-50 split between regular freight and produce, has experienced a decrease in overall business. “Regular freight dropped off this January from last January by 25 percent. Produce dropped by about 17 to 20 percent,” Kazan reveals.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS

In terms of the slowdown in the trucking industry, the major problems began when fuel prices started skyrocketing so fast that the trucking companies couldn’t keep up with the price increases. Kenny Lund, vice president of operations at Allen Lund Co., headquartered in La Cañada, CA, explains the dilemma. “Some fuel surcharges were set every week or every month, so some companies couldn’t keep up with how fast fuel prices were rising.” Now that fuel prices are dropping, that’s good news for the industry, overall. Nonetheless, the fact remains that consumers are buying less because of the economic downturn.

Robert Goldstein, owner and president of Genpro Inc., based in Rutherford, NJ, began preparing for a troubled economy when the cost of gas started to rise. “When gas was becoming more expensive, we started to plan ahead. The unfortunate thing is that margins and profits are affected, but operating costs remain the same, or if anything, increase.”

Another problem is that trucking companies are becoming more selective about which loads they’ll run. “Rates are off in the trucking industry, so more trucks are laying up for more days than they have



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in the past," Kazan states.

Ralph Massey, vice president of new market opportunities at Trinity Transport Inc., located in Seaford, DE, says his company sometimes has to scramble to find trucks to deliver its produce. "There are just fewer trucks available right now," he says, "and the trucks that are there are demanding more money to run the same lanes as they did before."

Part of the problem is that with less freight to deliver overall — both produce and regular freight — trucking companies are more reluctant to deliver loads from the

West Coast to the East Coast, unless they know that the trucks are going to have a return load to bring back. For example, Trinity used to work with a trucking company out of Chicago that had 50 trucks that would run anywhere in the country. "Now the company is only targeting certain areas for delivery where it knows it won't have to hunt for backloads," Massey declares. "That means the company will no longer deliver to certain areas they used to."

Dan Vache, vice president of the newly formed Supply Chain Logistics and Technology Program for United Fresh Produce Asso-

ciation, notes a need for cooperation between companies that haul perishable goods and those that don't. "There's no reason a cold carrier should be heading back empty-handed. Even if you have a refrigerated unit, it can be turned off. The truth is, trucks are better off hauling furniture than

United Fresh Takes On A New Challenge

No one has ever doubted the steadfast commitment of Washington, DC-based United Fresh Produce Association in its effort to facilitate the growth and development of the produce industry. The organization has recently taken one step further with the creation of its latest project, the Supply Chain Logistics and Technology Program. The program, which will be lead by Dan Vache, aims to "deliver education, hands-on tools and direct services to assist companies throughout the fresh produce supply chain in meeting challenges in transportation, cold chain management, information technologies, traceability, facilities management, energy efficiency, packing and packaging needs," according to United Fresh's recent press release.

Vache, who brings more than 30 years of experience in the industry, will be joined by a panel of experts from all areas of the industry, and maintains that United's new program will touch everything, from beginning to end. "We want to address priorities, issues and processes for improving the industry, all the while squeezing the most dollars we can out of the supply chain, because in the end, all of those saved dollars will improve the bottom line."

The program will provide a forum for experts to come together and have open lines of communication, enhancing the efficiency of product distribution and finding effective solutions to industry-wide problems. For example, one of today's hot button issues is climate change. "As an industry, we are aware that we need to reduce our greenhouse gases and fuel emissions," declares Vache. "There are emissions from cooling and storage facilities, as well as transportation and redistribution centers. This is why the council is so great. It provides a venue for the industry to come together to find solutions." **pb**



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nothing else," he admits. But he warns, "Rates for trucking perishables are much higher than that of dry goods. So freight companies might have to lower prices to be able to compete in a competitive market."

On top of the fact that trucking companies are getting finicky about which routes they'll run, another problem is that there aren't as many trucks to drive as there was before. According to Lund, part of the prob-

lem is that when a number of small trucking companies went out of business due to rising fuel prices, some ended up selling their trucks. "When the dollar was weak, many trucks were shipped abroad and purchased by buyers in Russia and Asia," explains Lund. "There was just a mass exit of trucking capacity. I've never seen anything like that before."

Goldstein notes there has always been a shortage of trucks. "We've always been faced with a transportation crisis. It started with escalating fuel costs and then it was escalating insurance rates and escalating operating costs. It all means less trucks on the road. There will always be a gap between what's available and what you need."

Vache agrees. "To some extent, there will always be carriers. We have been spoiled by the efficiency of the trucking industry," he says. "But now, more frequently than ever, we see equipment laying idle, and newer equipment is slower getting on the roads. Right now, in this economy, how does someone get financed to buy a new refrigeration unit? They are either forced out of the business or forced to use an older unit, and we don't want either one of those situations. It's obviously an economical equation."

Lund points out another indication of the ongoing diminishing supply of trucks is the fact that the truck manufacturing indus-

try is producing only half the number of the Class 8 trucks. "In a normal year, we need 250,000 new Class 8 trucks to replenish the industry. This year, we're only producing 125,000 trucks," Lund says. "This is helping a bit now because we're not transporting as much freight, but when we have more volume of freight, we're not going to have the capacity of trucks to turn it around."

As if that wasn't enough, by 2010, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is going to require trucking companies use cleaner running Navistar engines. "This is going to create even more of a

shortage, especially since Caterpillar has just announced that the company is halting production of Class 8 engines because of these new standards," Lund expresses.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Eventually, when the economy starts picking up, it's likely that there's going to be a shortage of trucks and drivers — many of whom may have given up on the industry by then because of a lack of work. In order to prevent too many drivers from leaving the industry, Lund underscores the importance of building solid relationships with

"In a normal year, we need 250,000 new Class 8 trucks to replenish the industry. This year, we're only producing 125,000."

**— Kenny Lund
Allen Lund Co.**



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Reader Service # 5

Railways Or Highways?

Dan Brooks, produce freight coordinator for Wegman's Food Markets Inc., a 79-store chain based in Rochester, NY, admits that in the face of fluctuating gas prices and uncertain supplies of labor in the trucking industry, Wegman's is considering the possibility of shipping more produce by rail. "We're looking into doing 5 percent of our produce by rail," Brooks reveals. "There's a lot of opportunity to start utilizing rail. You can get a consistently low price that doesn't fluctuate with fuel increases."

The disadvantage of rail, however, is that it usually takes at least one extra day to ship produce by rail, rather than truck. "Most shipments coming out of California take six or seven days, so if you add an extra day,

that can be a lot," Brooks says. "The other problem with rail is that once you send out a shipment, there's no way you can change the delivery appointment time once it's loaded, and it's also not as easy to change destination points like you can when you're delivering product by truck."

While railways might not be practical for every kind of perishable out there, United Fresh's Vache does see some benefits to using the rail system. "Steel on steel is a very fuel efficient method of transport. While strawberries and peaches may not fit in to this mode of transport, root vegetables, such as potatoes and onions — where there is a little more leeway with time — might work very well."

pb

them right now. "When things are tight like they are now, that's the time for companies to solidify their relationships with drivers for the long-term," Lund states.

Jesse Peay, operations manager for High Street Logistics Inc., headquartered in San

Luis Obispo, CA, is taking steps to ensure his drivers are still there when the economy improves. "We try to retain truckers by paying them a fair rate," he asserts. "We don't want to gouge them just because prices are going down. Our goal is to keep them haul-

ing for us."

Money aside, studies show the reason most drivers leave the industry is due to the manner in which they're treated. "I've always pushed the idea that you have to treat drivers well," says Allen Lund Co.'s Lund. "It doesn't make sense to spend all that time and energy growing, picking, packing and cooling a full load of produce and then put it in the hands of someone you treat poorly. It's important to count these drivers as an integral part of the process, rather than a necessary evil."

This is a message that both receivers and suppliers have begun taking to heart over the past few years. Shippers are using packaging that's getting easier to load and unload, and receivers are making it easier for drivers to check in and check out at the docks. "You have appointments for checking in and out, and receivers are providing break rooms where the drivers can rest while they're waiting for the doors to open," explains Lund.

VALUE-ADDED SERVICES

In addition to trying to retain drivers by providing them with better working conditions, many transportation companies are also working hard to provide shipping and

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receiving companies more value-added services. John Druckenmiller, transportation account manager at Lange Logistics Inc., in Franklin, TN, reveals all of his wholesale and chain store customers are running tighter inventories and looking to cut costs wherever they can. "We're doing a lot of scheduling for pickup and delivery appointments, which helps take more off our customers' plates, and it's a way for us to differentiate ourselves from the competition. We might also do other things, like managing the financials for the carriers that are get-

ting dispatched. That way, instead of the buyer having to talk to 15 or 16 different companies, they just talk to us and we'll handle the entire distribution of the load."

Lund's company is also offering more value-added services than ever before. "We're getting more into fourth-party logistics, where we work with other brokers on behalf of shippers and help them do the scheduling, receiving, pricing, claims management and freight payment," he adds. For one customer, Lund built a Web site that allows the customer to track loads, upload

"We try to retain truckers by paying them a fair rate. We don't want to gouge them just because prices are going down. Our goal is to keep them hauling for us."

**— Jesse Peay
High Street Logistics**

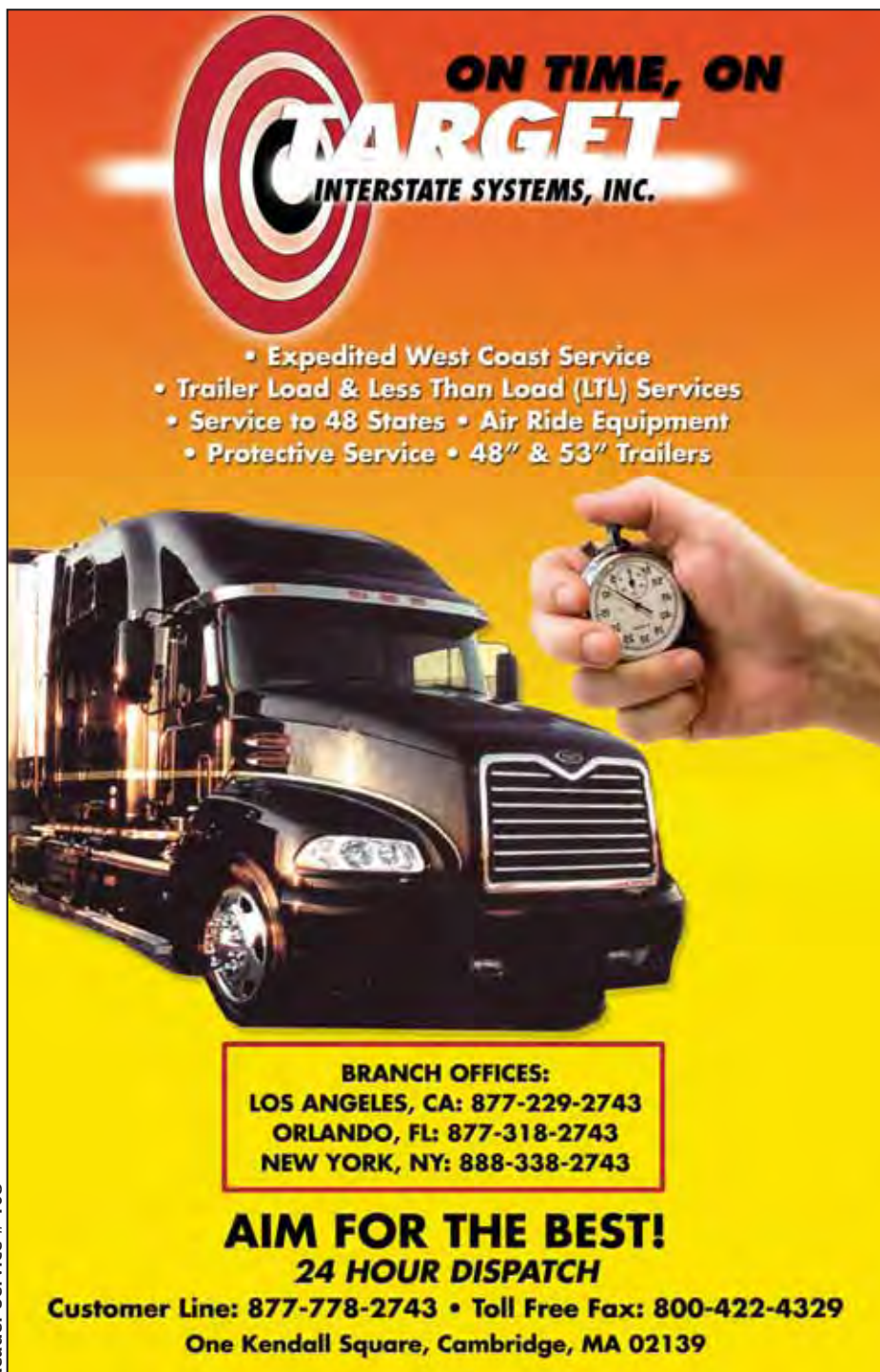
invoices and schedule pickup points at different loading locations with several different crews.

Trinity's Massey says his company has set up a freight-management service so its customers can log onto the computer to determine which shipping company will offer the best rate for any given delivery — even if that company isn't always Trinity. "Sometimes, we'll have a customer that needs to move 1,000 different shipments all over the country, and we'll tell them the best way to move it. Hopefully, Trinity makes it to the top of the list most of the time. But even if we don't get the business from the freight, we still come out ahead because we get the business for selling them the packages."

Transportation companies are also going the extra mile when it comes to safety. "In the past, it was understood that a broker or shipper didn't have any liability if there was an accident," says Lund. "Now, if you have knowledge that the guy was an unsafe operator, you're liable."

Instead of simply choosing the carrier with the best price and making sure they have cargo insurance, transportation brokers must also look at truckers' safety ratings, check their W-9s and verify their locations and liability insurance. "It's not just a matter of qualifying these carriers once a year," Lund adds. "You have to qualify them for every load."

High Street Logistics has an 11-point safety check on carriers. "We try to make sure that the carriers we hire are in good standing and have good safety records and references," says Peay. "We also contact the drivers directly, which is something our customers like about us." **pb**



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Beef Up California Spring Veggie Sales

Get creative with promotional efforts this spring to build profits of California's lineup of outstanding vegetables.

BY JACQUELINE ROSS LIEBERMAN

California spring vegetables — notably asparagus, cauliflower, celery and leafy greens — are poised for another great year, and retailers can take advantage of these items through effective promotions and other merchandising techniques.

"California vegetables are basically the best," states Allan Sabatier, senior vice president of sales and marketing for Salyer American Fresh Foods Inc., in Monterey, CA. "They have legs. Due to great soil and climate conditions, California spring veggies are so good they practically walk out the door." But that doesn't stop Sabatier from promoting them. Salyer works with each of its customers to help promote California spring vegetables.

This year, Salyer is working to move its line of orange, purple and green cauliflower items. POS material on each item may include recipes, coupons and nutritional information. Consumers may find themselves surprised to learn orange cauliflower, for example, contains 25 times as much vitamin C as white, and the purple variety is especially high in antioxidants. Green cauliflower is high in

vitamin A and folacin. "We're also buying print media with our customers," adds Sabatier.

Sam Duda, divisional vice president of the Salinas, CA, branch of Duda Farms Fresh Foods Inc., headquartered in Oviedo, FL, says industry-wide overall planted acreage of California cauliflower is up six percent from 2008. "Cool weather is benefiting crop growth this year."

Nothing says "spring" like asparagus, and 2009 looks to be an especially good year for California asparagus, according to Tom Tjerandsen, head of domestic marketing at the California Asparagus Commission (CAC), located in Holtville, CA. "Mother nature, to date, has been very kind to asparagus. We're confident that we're going to have enough of a high-quality crop to send to customers around the country."

Industry-wide acreage of other California commodities is down. Celery acreage is down 1 percent from 2008. "Rain and cool weather in the Salinas Valley has slowed maturity of the crop," reports Duda. While overall planted acreage of head lettuce is down 10 percent from 2008, "So far the crop is growing well." Lastly, overall crop acreage for broccoli is down 8 percent, "The cool weather is boosting crop growth."

PROMOTIONAL PROGRAMS

To help move asparagus, "We have an aggressive program that has been refined by input from growers, shippers and retailers around the country," notes Tjerandsen. The program includes "sales-proven" POS materials, recipe booklets, handling brochures for retail employees and other employee-education tools.

"We have a program designed to help retailers understand how to most effectively promote California fresh asparagus," Tjerandsen explains. "Retailers are learning to give consumers a choice in size of asparagus — thick and thin." By offering several sizes, which can be utilized in different



Safer Greens For A Wary Public

In light of recent food scares, consumers may be glad to know California's leafy greens are among the safest in the world, thanks to the California Leafy Green Products Handler Marketing Agreement (LGMA). "The LGMA represents an unprecedented commitment to protect public health," reports Scott Horsfall, CEO. "It provides mandatory food-safety audits by government inspectors of all of its members and their growers. These audits take place on a regular and random basis throughout the year. By working with California's handlers of leafy green products to ensure the safest possible food supply, the LGMA is building confidence in California products and offering retailers assurance that the leafy greens they sell have been grown according to high food-safety standards."

The LGMA offers a food-safety certification program for leafy green products grown in California, Horsfall explains. "Through mandatory government audits, the program certifies that its members are implementing a set of commodity-specific, food-safety practices. By only purchasing from LGMA-certified companies, retailers can be confident that the leafy green products they sell have been grown according to LGMA-accepted, food-safety practices verified by mandatory government audits."

"Consumer research validates the approach taken by the leafy green industry and the LGMA," he continues. "A national survey conducted in 2008 showed that when the program is explained to them, 89 percent of consumers said the LGMA program gave them more confidence in the safety of leafy green products."

Retailers can ensure they are buying leafy green products only from certified members of the LGMA. Horsfall notes several ways retailers can verify whether or not their suppliers are in good standing.

Certified members are suppliers that have been audited by government inspectors and found in compliance with the program's food-safety practices. Certified members use the LGMA Service Mark on each of their bills of landing.

The LGMA Web site maintains a list of currently certified members at all times. Members in good standing are issued a certificate of compliance on a quarterly basis, which they can provide to their customers upon request.

Retailers can sign up for LGMA Updates. These e-mail alerts are provided whenever there is a significant change to the LGMA Web site such as a de-certification action taken against a member for non-compliance with the mandatory LGMA food-safety practices. **pb**

types of recipes, "They're generating substantial additional revenue."

On CAC's Web site, "We've added many more recipes for consumer and foodservice use, and we've updated a lot of the growing

and shipping dates," Tjerandsen says. Retailers can expect to see articles about California asparagus in consumer newspapers and magazines. "We are putting a number of consumer press releases into circulation,"

he adds.

Individual asparagus growers, such as Mission Produce Inc., headquartered in Oxnard, CA, are also helping to promote the crop. This spring, Mission will offer promo-

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To participate, send us the following:

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2. Type of business.
3. Names and dates of promotion (must have taken place between June 1, 2008 and June 1, 2009).
4. Promotion objectives.
5. Description of promotion.
6. Promotion results (sales or traffic increases, media attention). What made this program a success?
7. All support materials used in the promotion – such as POP, ads, posters, TV commercials. High-res photos are requested.

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- Mann Packing Company, Inc.
- New York Apple Association, Inc., and T. Marzetti Company
- Ocean Mist Farms • Pear Bureau Northwest
- Sage Fruit Company • Stemilt Growers, Inc.
- Sunrise Growers, Inc. • Tanimura & Antle, Inc.
- The Oppenheimer Group and American Diabetes Association
- University of Massachusetts Amherst and the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council
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tional ad opportunities to its retail customer base during peak volume periods, as well as discount and contract pricing, reports retail sales manager Cruz Carrera.

Although California grows leafy greens year-round, spring is the prime season. Tanimura & Antle Inc., based in Salinas, CA, will do most of its promoting during this time, according to president and CEO Rick Antle. In addition to its core products, iceberg and romaine lettuces and onions, Tanimura & Antle has a line of "artisan lettuces" that was introduced in spring 2008.

Tanimura & Antle plans to promote its items through ads in trade publications and direct mail to retailers. The company also plans to work directly with retailers to reach consumers. "We find the best promotions are ones where we work together," says Antle. He is hoping to convince retailers to cross-merchandise lettuces with non-produce salad components such as croutons and dressings.

The best way to move California spring lettuces is to give them the attention they need, suggests Antle. Ads have become more important as the economy is forcing cash-strapped consumers to look for the best bargains. "You're hearing more about people shopping the ads."



Spring is prime season for California leafy greens.

Nichole Towell, Duda's marketing development manager, suggests retailers participate in the California Grown campaign, which is part of the Buy California Marketing Agreement. "Retailers can sign up to receive the free California Grown Lift Gift," she notes.

Looking ahead, the quality of promotions will become more important to consumers than quantity, she adds. "Consumers are scrutinizing values at retail and overlooking those items which they do not perceive as

providing enough value for the price. It will be about quality over quantity of promotions. Retail, large store, and club stores are seeing increased sales growth due to the current economic conditions. The consumer trade-down behavior means bulk vegetables are in again, because they may be cheaper by the pound than their value-added counterpart. Retailers should effectively merchandise items that are on promotion in the produce department and highlight available savings." **pb**

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MASTERS OF MERCHANDISING SUPPLEMENT

Every once in a while, the opportunity presents itself to do well while also doing good. Such is the case with this, our eighth annual Masters of Merchandising supplement. The industry owes a tip of the hat to the collection of industry leaders who elected to invest with us in a marketing vehicle that is both promotional and educational.

As retailers consolidate, they are in a position to expect more support from producers, and intellectual capital is just about the most valuable support one can provide.

Each vendor worked hard to produce a piece of advice for the industry on how to more effectively merchandise the product category at hand. By sharing knowledge acquired while working with retailers throughout North America, these vendors help retailers move more product, help producers find outlets for production and help the world by encouraging a more healthful diet.

Increasing sales of fruits and vegetables is not only a matter of big pronouncements, such as the Fruits & Veggies – More Matters! program. Sales in general can increase only if sales of specific items increase. That means knowing how to build consumer trial and how to offer the most effective assortment; it means knowing how to market things on a day-to-day basis and how to do some out-of-the-box things just to keep consumer interest high.

Retailers, please take the time to review this offering carefully. When did you last think about how to increase sales of celery? Or plantains? Or leafy greens? Here is a chance to think of things in a different way. When did you last really consider how to best sell bananas – was it when you were a produce department manager 10, 20 or 30 years ago? Here is an opportunity to revisit old subjects with a different perspective.

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MASTERS OF MERCHANDISING

The sponsors of this year's Masters of Merchandising section are a special breed. We spoke to many producers who declined to participate, saying they simply had no idea how to merchandise their own items effectively. When we offered to help them research the matter, we encountered all too many vendors who said, "That is the retailer's problem; we just book loads."

Merchandising is everyone's problem, and in the produce industry, "The Times, They Are A-Changin'!" As retailers consolidate, they are in a position to expect more support from producers, and intellectual capital is just about the most valuable support one can provide.

So kudos to our Masters of Merchandising sponsors. If you would like additional copies of the Masters of Merchandising supplement, please use the order form below. If you are a vendor and would like to see your category included next year, please use the same form.

There is always a temptation to try to keep knowledge tightly protected and controlled, but oftentimes what goes around comes around, and in sharing their knowledge, our sponsors are giving the industry a great gift. May it return to them many times over.

As an added service to our retail readers, we're printing additional copies of this guide, so if you would like extra copies of the 2009 Masters of Merchandising supplement to give to your colleagues, please fill out the form below and fax or mail it to us. For the cost of shipping and handling, we'll send you up to five supplements, so they will be available on a first-come basis.

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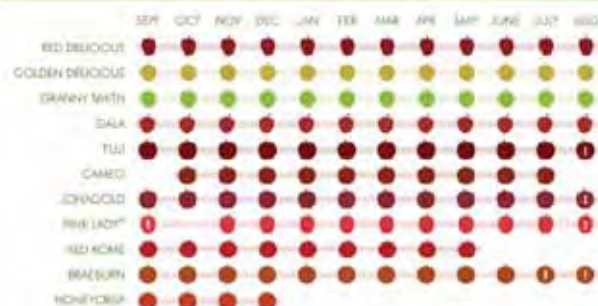
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Apple Varieties



Over the past ten years apple consumption has averaged 16.8 pounds per capita. In 2006, the year with the most recent information, apple consumption increased 6.9% from 2005. The anticipation is that the official numbers for 2007 will be similar to 2006 and that consumption will continue to increase in 2008 and 2009. This is due to an interest in new varieties as well as additional retail promotions. Now more than ever, savvy apple merchandising will generate huge year 'round return on investment.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Nothing attracts attention and generates sales like a large apple display. The display should be well signed and placed at the front of the department in your primary selling location. During the peak of the season, a secondary display toward the back of the department will generate additional sales.

PACKAGING OPTIONS

There are more options than ever when it comes to displaying fruit. Clamshells, poly bags, mesh bags, display-ready boxes and high-graphic bins are among the tools you can use to increase your apple category performance.

Increase Sales with Bins: Domex Superfresh Growers® has developed a high-impact-graphic tote bag display that will drive impulse sales and incremental sales at the same time. Pair this display with our Flavor Pairings® tote bags and you have the perfect opportunity to sell apples anywhere in the store. These are especially convenient for doing cross-promos using the suggestions on the tote bags. These bins are also handy for creating bulk or bag water-fall apple displays.

Bags: Create a separate section for your bag program to deliver incremental volume and sales. Over the last 3 years mesh bags have increased volume by as much as 11% to 16% every year. However, if your customers prefer poly then that is what you should display. Our hottest new item is our 2lb Superfresh Kids® bags. These are a great way to take advantage of this year's apple crop and promote real value to your customer.

Promotion: Plan promotions with bins and half-bins. Also available is our new Display Ready Case

QUICK TIPS

Provide a large assortment of varieties – you just might find the next “hot” apple for your customers

Promote apples year-round – they truly drive sales dollars

Create promotions around all Holidays and major sporting events

(DRC) that enables you to display in your lobby area. These beautiful displays create consumer excitement and increase impulse sales.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Apple-Rama: Almost any combination of apple varieties can be featured in your full-blown apple variety ads. It is recommended to run a major apple ad in early November as all varieties of new crop apples are available for promotion.

Gala: Historically the first apples picked every year in Washington. Plan your ads to run before Labor Day. Announce “new crop” in early ads in order to create maximum consumer demand across all varieties.

Frequency: Starting September 1, it is recommended you feature apples at a minimum every two weeks. Maximum sales result from retailers that run 8 ads every quarter.

New Year: After the Holidays as your customers get back to basic foods, this is the ideal time for a major ad and display push of your “healthy” apple category.

Holiday-Specific Ads: Christmas, Hanukkah, Valentine's Day, and St. Patrick's Day are the traditional holidays for apples, but don't forget to include apples in your ads around major sporting events too.

Timing: Continue to feature apples year-round. In fact, Domex Superfresh Growers Category Management team has conducted research revealing that stores lose sales and margin when they decrease shelf space for apples when stone fruit arrives. The average margin loss over a four-month period is

20.5%! Other studies have shown that when you position apples adjacent to, or just behind, stone fruit the average increase in gross profit is \$595 per store per week. With SmartFresh® treatment, apples keep their pressure (crispness) so you can now easily feature apples into June, July and even August that deliver a great eating experience along with greater profits.

National Apple Month: Every November is National Apple Month. This program receives nation-wide support from USApple and apple shippers and can really help kick off the holiday season.

Ad Features: Plan bag ad features in conjunction with your loose apple program. Value sizes like 2lb or 3lb bags increase your movement. Contact your Domex Superfresh Growers account manager for more information.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

The Flavor Pairings® tote bag program developed by Domex Superfresh Growers addresses consumer desires for new and interesting ways to include apples in their diet. Each of the variety-specific bags has a recipe designed to showcase that particular apple's flavor. The bags also suggest what other foods, i.e., meats, cheeses, wines and other produce items, pair well with that variety. These bags are an easy way to cross-promote apples with food from the entire store.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Culling several times a day along with proper rotation are critical to building consumer interest in apples. Bruised or scattered apples lower consumer confidence in the product and they will turn to other sources for good apples.

Temperature: Store cartons under constant refrigeration at 32°F with relative humidity of 90%.

Carton Protection: Keep apples in cartons with lids closed and away from strong scented foods and heavy moisture.

Handling: Move cartons as little as possible to avoid bruising and skin damage.

Rotate: Insure oldest product is staged to move to shelf display first.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Use Flavor Pairing™ tote bags to cross promote apples across all departments

Build Apple-Rama displays in October and November when all varieties become available

Offer samples of new varieties like Honey Crisp to create excitement for all apples

Use Domex Superfresh Growers high-impact-graphic full and half size bins to promote value-driven 3lb bags and 2lb Superfresh Kids® bags in high traffic areas



Mark Stollenow,
Stollenow Farms, Tieton, WA.
Domex Superfresh Grower

The *variety* you need
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- Heightening visibility of the category with POS messaging
- Increasing display space with secondary display locations to get artichokes into more consumers' minds and into their shopping carts

DISPLAY IDEAS AND TIPS FOR RETAIL

The photo below shows how a great display showcases the artichoke's attractiveness and color.

Go to our merchandising Web page for ideas: www.oceanmist.com



AVAILABILITY

Ocean Mist Farms is the only year-round grower of fresh artichokes. Three growing areas allow us to have a 52-week harvest schedule.

The peak of the annual Castroville, CA, crop will start in March and go through the end of May. Traditionally, the larger sizes peak at the front end in March and April with the smaller sizes peaking in April and May.

- APRIL: Heavier volume on larger sized artichokes (12-18-24 count)
- MAY: Heavier volume on medium and baby sized artichokes (30- to 36-count and baby sizes)

We suggest retailers utilize the variation of the crop volume (by size) to maximize their sales.

PROMOTIONAL IDEAS: HOLIDAY PROMOS

Artichoke sales exhibit sharp peaks in volume and dollars during holiday weeks and elevate from February through May, including the following holiday weeks: Valentine's Day, Easter, Mother's Day and Memorial Day.

Seasonality shows Memorial Day weekend the second biggest event of year. Opportunity exists to capitalize on key grilling occasions such as Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day weekend.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Most artichoke shoppers (72 percent) prefer to purchase individual artichokes from bulk displays. This preference increases with age and income.

BEST PRACTICES FOR MERCHANDISING ARTICHOKES

Shoppers say the quality of artichokes on display is the single most important factor when deciding to buy artichokes. Top 5 Reasons for impulse sales of artichokes:

- On sale/price reduction – 29 percent
- Attractive display caught my eye – 22 percent
- In-store advertising – 14 percent
- Coupon – 10 percent
- Signage in the store – 8 percent

KEY CATEGORY TRENDS

Artichoke household penetration is approximately 30 percent nationally, at approximately the same level as Brussels sprouts.

With less than half of consumers making the

decision to buy at the store, it increases the importance of reaching out to consumers at home on artichoke usage, nutrition and preparation.

The antioxidant level of fresh artichokes seems to present a potentially powerful sales opportunity.

Seventy-nine percent of survey respondents said the fact artichokes are higher in antioxidants than any other vegetable will have a significant impact on future purchases.

Fiber content is another great selling point. Most Americans consume only about half the daily recommended amount of fiber. Artichokes provide a simple solution. One medium artichoke, which contains 10 grams of dietary fiber, provides half the daily requirement of fiber.

TRENDS IN ARTICHOKE PACKAGING

More than half (54 percent) of consumers who buy packaged artichokes say it is because they are more convenient. Others purchase packages because of perceived value (31 percent).

Ocean Mist offers the following clamshell packs:

- 4-count (48- or 36-count size artichoke)
- 6-count (36-count size artichoke)
- 9- and 12-count baby size artichoke

Other artichoke trend items:

- Organic Artichokes
- Long Stem Artichokes

Both have Large Hang Tags with UPC code and cooking instructions.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING IDEAS FOR ARTICHOKE

Promote the "Edible Flower" for Valentines or Mother's Day.

Cross-merchandise the following items:

- Lemons
- Mayonnaise
- Olive oil and balsamic vinegar
- Stuffing Items such as Brie or Gouda cheese with bread crumbs

RETAIL PROMOTIONAL TIPS

Retailers can build sales by converting occasional purchasers into everyday consumers. Strategies include:

- Reducing discount percent on some promotions while maintaining a few "hot" promotions to generate excitement

FROST KISSED ARTICHOKE

Winter months bring Frosted Artichokes from the colder temperatures causing the artichoke to "flake & peel." Most foodies know that once cooked the peeling disappears and the frosted artichoke has an



enhanced nutty flavor. Go to our webpage to learn more on Frost-Kissed artichokes and order POS: www.oceanmist.com

ANTIOXIDANTS

Promote the health benefit message of artichokes – cooked artichokes have more antioxidants per serving than any other fresh vegetable.

Go to our Web page to learn the facts on antioxidant content: www.oceanmist.com



 MULTIPLE CHOICE

WHAT'S YOUR ARTICHOKE IQ?

TAKE THIS TEST AND FIND OUT.

WHO IS THE MARKET LEADER IN FRESH
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- A) ☐ OCEAN MIST, BECAUSE IT HAS SPENT
85 YEARS PERFECTING THE ART OF GROWING
FRESH ARTICHOKE.
- B) ☐ OCEAN MIST, BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY YEAR-ROUND
SOURCE FOR PREMIUM FRESH ARTICHOKE.
- C) ☐ OCEAN MIST, BECAUSE OF ITS IDEAL ARTICHOKE
LAND BASE.
- D) ☐ OCEAN MIST, BECAUSE THEY HAVE DEVELOPED
PROPRIETARY, THORNED VARIETIES THAT ARE
THE BEST-EATING ARTICHOKE.
- E) ☐ ALL OF THE ABOVE.

Solution: e) All of the above.



As many retailers already know, it's hard to go wrong with artichokes—as long as you rely on Ocean Mist Farms.

We've been the market leader since 1924. And with more and more consumers learning to love artichokes, we're here to deliver the best artichoke eating experience that your customers expect—time and time again—52 weeks a year.

**The more you learn about artichokes,
the better you'll like Ocean Mist Farms.**



Learn more at www.oceanmist.com



PERUVIAN ASPARAGUS IMPORTERS ASSOCIATION

Contact: Priscilla Lleras

Tel: 817-793-3133

Email: prestige@1scom.net



Per capita consumption of fresh asparagus has increased by more than 45 percent since 1998....in the last decade alone consumption of asparagus in the United States has almost doubled, exceeding the rate of growth exhibited by nearly all other vegetables. Retailers can help promote consumption and increase sales of asparagus with just a few simple merchandising, promotion and handling techniques.

In addition to the U.S. supply sources, Peru has become a major supplier of asparagus allowing U.S. retailers to have year-round availability and thus build the category. In 2007, Peruvian asparagus represented 57 percent of the total U.S. Import Dollar Value for fresh market asparagus, a 24 percent year-over-year increase.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

The year-round availability of asparagus supports category management programs designed to build the category not only during peak holiday periods but throughout the year. Strategically displaying the category to ensure consumers see it will increase sales. Make sure displays are especially visible and well-positioned in the produce department to gain attention.

This highly nutritious vegetable is a convenient consumer purchase and now includes different forms of packaging available to assist display practices. Fresh asparagus is available in white, as well as green, and tips as well as whole spears. Large display tables of different product forms (whole spear bunches, microwave tray-packed trimmed spears which, packaged and bunched asparagus tips, and white asparagus) will increase sales and add profits to the produce department.

SUGGESTED SIGNAGE/POS

Effective signage should stress suggestive usage ideas as well as the many nutritional benefits of fresh asparagus. Signage should recommend serving ideas depending upon the time of the year, such as "great for baking", "easy-to-barbecue" and "microwaveable."

Nutritional information is also a key element in effective retail signage. Asparagus is a good source of potassium, vitamin A, and vitamin C. Asparagus is low in fat and contains no cholesterol. Asparagus is

QUICK TIPS

Display fresh asparagus in a prominent position that is visible and easily accessible.

Display multiple SKU's of fresh asparagus to increase consumer purchase penetration and frequency of purchase.

Refrigerate and hydrate to maintain quality.

Educate the consumer to the ease-of-preparation and high nutritional benefits.

also rich in rutin and folacin, which has been proven important in the duplication of cells for growth and repair of the body.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

The Peruvian season complements the supply of domestically grown fresh asparagus allowing for stores to offer customers a year-round product. U.S. domestic product usually peaks in the spring and early summer months. Product from Peru is available starting in June, peaking October through December, and wraps up in February.

In 2007, the U.S. imported more than 273,470,208 pounds of fresh-market asparagus of which Peruvian asparagus represented over 56 percent of the Total Supply.

VALUE ADDED

In an effort to increase household penetration and reach new consumers, a number of Peruvian asparagus importers are working closely with their suppliers and/or farms to bring value-added options – including microwaveable and ready-to-eat – to market that are designed for both retail and foodservice. These value-added programs provide the consumer with convenience and savings.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Fresh green asparagus is traditionally heavily-promoted for the Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, but increased promotions occur during the Summer with barbecue themes and Fall cross-promotions with products. Merchandising white asparagus next to green offers the consumer more choices as well as providing a contrasting and attractive display.

Health-related promotional programs are a proven method of gaining sales because of fresh asparagus' proven nutritional benefits as well as its delightful taste.

The Peruvian Asparagus Importers Association (PAIA) has developed a Category Management Plan Outline for Fresh Peruvian Asparagus. Their focus in the development and distribution of the Category Management Plan Outline is to share information with retailers, consumers and the industry at large regarding the health benefits of asparagus, as well as provide data pertaining to the trade. Encompassed within the Plan are statistics identifying market growth and trends, industry detail, including informational data that will aid retailers in marketing and promotion, ultimately assisting in efforts to increasing sales. The Plan also provides retailers and consumers with details pertaining to the nutritional value of fresh asparagus.

FRESHNESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Green and white asparagus is bright-looking with closed, firm tips. The butt-end of fresh asparagus should be cleanly cut and sufficiently hydrated.

DISPLAY, CARE AND HANDLING

Ideally, fresh asparagus should be displayed under refrigeration or with the butt-end in water or touching a wet pad. Fresh asparagus has a ninety percent water content and care should be taken to avoid the chance for dehydration. If the butt-ends do not look fresh, they can be trimmed to provide a fresh appearance. If the tips are slightly wilted, they can be freshened by soaking them in cold water or by misting them.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Fresh asparagus needs to be kept cold (34-36 degrees F) and moist (damp room) prior to display. The refrigeration chain should not be broken. Fresh asparagus is not ethylene-sensitive but is susceptible to absorbing very strong odors.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Fresh asparagus has numerous cross-merchandising opportunities such as with salad, oils and dressings, with deli products like ham and cheese, wines and during the Summer, barbecue meats and fish. Tray-packed fresh asparagus can also be cross-merchandised with packaged salad.

Fresh and packaged asparagus can also be cross-merchandised in the meat department, for example with steaks, to provide a meal solution for customers.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Use in-store demo programs and meal-theme-related promotions to increase consumer awareness of fresh asparagus as a convenient purchase and economical dinner component as well as a nutritious snack. In-store demo programs have proven highly effective in increasing consumer awareness of fresh asparagus as an "everyday" item.

PERUVIAN ASPARAGUS IMPORTERS ASSOCIATION
CONTACT PRISCILLA LLERAS TEL: 817.793.3133 EMAIL: PRESTIGE@1SCOM.NET
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- YEAR ROUND AVAILABILITY -
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 Dole Fresh Vegetables
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 Phone: (831)-641-4312 Fax: (831)-641-4332
 laura_a_smith@na.dole.com





Asparagus

Sales Handled By:
 Mike Parr, Martin Maldonado,
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 305-592-5562
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 Tracy Wood - Florida Office
 772-316-0364
 tracy@keystonefruit.com

 **Fresh, Year-Round**

Dan Borer - West Coast Office
 509-526-9200
 dan@keystonefruit.com





 **Fresh, Year-Round**

Contact:
 Gary Meadows
 - Los Angeles Office
 323-890-8100
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PROGRESSIVE PRODUCE



California Avocado Commission

38 Discovery, Suite 150, Irvine, CA 92618-3105

Phone: 949-341-1955 Fax: 949-341-1970

Website: CaliforniaAvocado.com/Retail Email: dcruz@avocado.org



KEY STRATEGIES TO INCREASE SALES

- Promote and advertise **RIPE** California Avocados throughout the California season (April-Sept)
- Offer a two-size avocado program
- Merchandise bagged avocados for value-conscious consumers

WHAT MAKES THIS CATEGORY IMPORTANT TO THE PRODUCE DEPARTMENT?

- Avocados are ranked the Number 7 fruit in the produce department (*Source: IRI/FreshLook Data*)
- Consumer demand continues to climb, with retail sales growing across the country and consumption of one billion pounds annually is the norm – and it is still growing

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

- Display **Hand Grown in California** Avocados in a large prominent, permanent location and also in a secondary impulse location to boost shopper awareness and sales
- Bagged avocados make an excellent secondary SKU and can generate sales of up to 53 more units per store, per week than stores without bags*
- A two-size strategy (selling both large and small size avocados) can increase category volume and sales by nearly 100 percent*
- Avocados stickered as “**RIPE**” can outsell non-stickered fruit by as much as 28 percent*

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

- Advertise and display **Ripe** California Avocados to capitalize on your shoppers’ demand for ripe avocados (as much as four to one over firm fruit)*
- 77 percent of shoppers purchasing avocados plan to eat them within 48 hours*

SIGNAGE

- Use **Hand Grown in California** POS materials to increase shopper awareness and help boost sales
- Use “**RIPE**” and “**Ready to Eat**” signage on displays of **RIPE** California Avocados
- Feature recipes and usage ideas to spark consumer purchase
- Draw attention to displays of **Organic California Avocados** with point-of-sale signage

QUICK TIPS

Visit CaliforniaAvocado.com/Retail for all your merchandising information, materials and retail support

Order **Hand Grown in California** POS materials to drive demand

NUTRITION

Provide shoppers with nutritional information to encourage purchase:

- Avocados are included in **Fruits & Veggies—More Matters™** consumer educational program to promote increased consumption of fruits and vegetables for good health
- Avocados contain 81 micrograms of the carotenoid lutein, which some studies suggest may help maintain healthy eyes
- Avocados contribute nearly 20 vitamins, minerals and beneficial plant compounds that can contribute to the nutrient quality of your diet
- Avocados, due to their mono and poly-unsaturated fat content, are a healthy substitution for foods rich in saturated fat
- One-fifth of a medium avocado (1 oz) has 50 calories and contributes nearly 20 vitamins and minerals making it a good nutrient choice
- Avocados contain 76 milligrams beta-sitosterol in a 3-oz serving of avocado. Beta-sitosterol is a natural plant sterol which may help maintain healthy cholesterol levels
- Visit CaliforniaAvocado.com for complete nutritional details

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

- California Avocados provide excellent cross-merchandising opportunities with both grocery and produce items to maximize sales opportunities: bagged salads, limes, lemons, peppers, tomatoes, chips and snacks, sandwich and hamburger items, soups, pizzas, ethnic foods, wines and more

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

- Always rotate and refresh displays daily
- Always handle avocados gently to avoid bruising
- Never display avocados near misting systems, on wet-racks or on refrigerated displays below 42° Fahrenheit

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

- Bring the avocados inside the store immediately upon arrival
- Place boxes with soft fruit on top and those with firmer fruit on the bottom
- Breaking and ripe fruit may be stored in a cooler
- In general, firm preconditioned fruit can be held at room temperature for three to five days and breaking-to-ripe fruit for two to three days
- Do not store hard, non-breaking fruit below 45° Fahrenheit to avoid chill damage

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

- In addition to Hass (which represents nearly 96% of the national retail avocado volume*), other delicious **Hand Grown in California** varieties include Lamb Hass (a summer Hass-like variety), Bacon, Gwen, Fuerte, Pinkerton, Reed and Zutano
- Organic **Hand Grown in California** Avocados provide an excellent opportunity to build your category

Contact the California Avocado Commission for more information about:

- Nutritional research and studies
- In-store ripeness audits
- Best practices merchandising research
- Avocado business reviews (category data)
- Promotional opportunities
- Co-marketing programs
- Point-of-sale material
- Consumer advertising

Insist on California Avocados

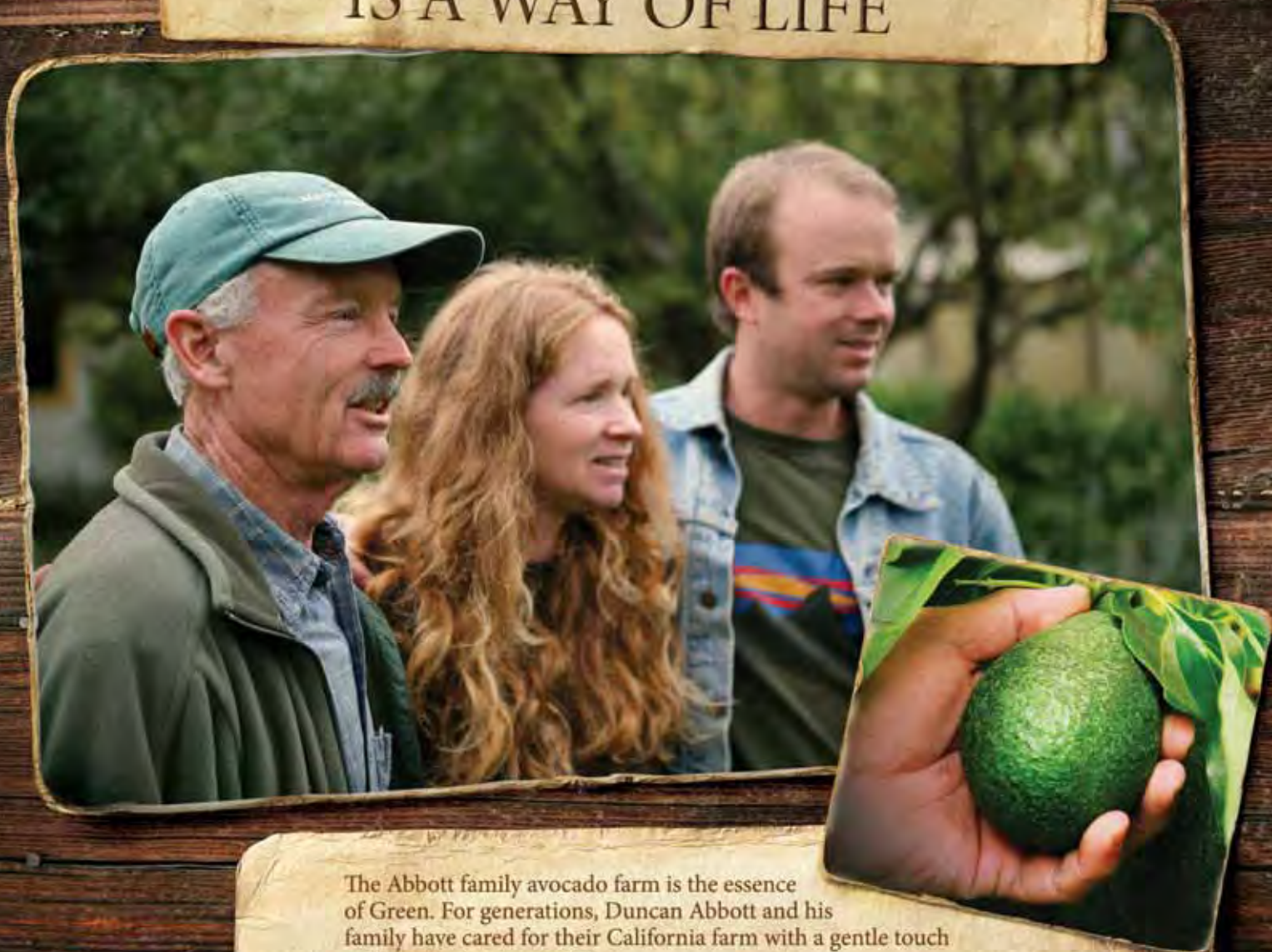
**Based on California Avocado Commission Best Practices Research and data*

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Consumers think of avocados as a celebration food

Special occasions and events drive avocado sales, for example: **March Collegiate Basketball, Cinco de Mayo, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, St. Patrick's Day, Tailgating opportunities, World Series, Thanksgiving, New Years, Super Bowl, and local events and celebrations**

FOR CALIFORNIA AVOCADO GROWERS
GREEN
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The Abbott family avocado farm is the essence of Green. For generations, Duncan Abbott and his family have cared for their California farm with a gentle touch and an eye for sustainability.

Their orchards thrive in soil nurtured by nature — not chemicals. Their avocados are grown, harvested and packed by hand, not carbon-emitting machines. These Green practices make Duncan one of the leading visionaries growing California Avocados.

Like the Abbott family's mission to nurture, the California Avocado Commission has hand-crafted retail merchandising programs and marketing materials to help you grow your category.

To learn more about the retail support programs or to order in-store POS materials, visit CaliforniaAvocado.com/Retail or call (800) 344-4333.

Insist on California Avocados





DOLE

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Website: www.dole.com



BANANAS ARE WELL POSITIONED TO PROMOTE IN A DIFFICULT ECONOMY

Consumers are faced with very difficult choices as economic conditions worsen. Policymakers and pundits have made it clear that the economy is likely to get worse before it gets better and recently released economic statistics appear to confirm this outlook for the future.

In addition to the nutritional value, convenience, and flavor that bananas offer to consumers, bananas are also the lowest cost fruit in the produce department. Consumers clearly understand this. The table below demonstrates this by showing the change in retail dollar sales, pounds sold, and average retail price between 2007 and 2008 for the total United States.

Total US Retail Conventionally Grown Fresh Fruit Sales % Change 2007 - 2008			
Product	\$ Sales	Lbs Sold	Retail Price
Apples	6.3%	-7.0%	13.9%
Avocados	10.2%	-0.6%	9.3%
Bananas	19.3%	2.5%	18.6%
Berries	9.6%	6.4%	3.4%
Cherries	-6.7%	3.4%	19.9%
Grapes	-0.6%	-0.9%	5.4%
Melons	-0.4%	-6.5%	5.2%
Oranges	12.3%	-1.1%	-12.7%
Peaches	5.8%	-4.8%	2.4%
Pineapple	1.2%	0.0%	2.0%

Source: FreshLook Marketing

Despite experiencing the highest national average retail price increase (except cherries), 18.6%, the banana pound sales still increased 2.5% banana in 2008 compared to 2007, according to Fresh Look Marketing data.

QUICK TIPS

Ensure proper backroom handling conditions and procedures

Keep your DOLE Banana display fully stocked and clean during business hours

Have nutrition and recipe information available for your customers or direct them to www.dole.com

Other higher priced retail items, including apples, avocados, and melons, did not fare so well. For these items, dollar sales increased, but the number of pounds sold decreased. The national trend is quite consistent across the regions of the United States; however, the competitive effects of changes in retail pricing had significant market share implications. Contact your Dole representative to review the results from your region and ensure you are getting your fair share of the market.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Dole Fresh Fruit Company provides its retail and wholesale customers with services that improve the way products are received, handled, ripened and displayed. A knowledgeable team of technical service representatives work directly with Dole customers to perfect ripening, equipment management and handling procedures.

Our team of merchandising representatives works at retail stores to help develop displays that will move more DOLE Bananas.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

When building a profitable banana display at retail, there are several items to take into account. Brand recognition and loyalty are key. A recent independent study showed that consumers look for specific brands that they trust to buy. The study found, "DOLE continues to stand out as the brand consumers say they seek out and buy when available." Thirty-five percent of respondents surveyed said they buy DOLE products. The next brand mentioned received only 14 percent.

Your DOLE Banana display should be positioned in a prominent area, preferably the front-end display unit in the produce department.

A beautifully stocked display will draw consumers into your produce department. Stocking is important. With the busy lifestyles that most people lead today, the time people shop is scattered around the clock. The morning and afternoon will bring in the stay-at-home-mom crowd, as well as seniors. Both of these demographic groups are loyal DOLE Banana consumers. In the evening, late at night and on weekends, you will have an influx of shoppers

who work full time and fit shopping into their schedules.

All these consumers have one thing in common; they all like to buy their DOLE Bananas from a neat, fully stocked banana display. If the display appears half-empty, they get the impression the fruit has been picked through, leaving them with the leftovers. This is why it is critical to keep your DOLE Banana display fully stocked, cleaned and culled throughout business hours

GIVE YOUR CONSUMERS MORE OF WHAT THEY LOVE... MORE OF WHAT IS GOOD FOR THEM

Bananas continue to be a top selling item sold in grocery stores with household penetration exceeding 90%. Consumers love the banana's sweet taste, nutrition, and convenience. Still, the average retail banana transaction size remains at roughly 2.5 pounds.

This is due in part to the established daylight banana consumption patterns by consumers centering around breakfast or a snack early in the afternoon. Dole has seized upon an opportunity to educate consumers about delicious and exciting new usages for bananas, nutritional benefits, and other incentives that promote purchasing more of the bananas they already love.

The goal of this integrated promotional strategy is to increase the average retail transaction size by one-half-pound without resorting to steep retail promotional price reductions. Dole provides its customers with customized turn-key, easy to execute promotional programs that will increase the banana transaction size and banana profits!

Dole provides retailers with all of the customized components to ensure success; including eye-catching point of sale materials that communicate clear messages to the consumer, in-store posters, take-one educational materials, and retail-specific webpages.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Entice consumers with incentives to increase their banana transaction size

Feature "Fourth Pound Free" Promotions

Arrange for Bobby Banana to make a surprise visit to your store





ARE YOU LOSING REVENUE AT THE CHECK STAND?

Consumer interest in fresh organic fruit has skyrocketed. From 2007 to 2008, fresh organic fruit dollar sales increased 25% and pound sales jumped more than 50%, according to FreshLook Marketing data. Consumers have shown a willingness to pay a premium price for organic fruit in exchange for the reassurance that the bananas were grown in a more earth-friendly manner. Berries, apples, and bananas are the top selling organic fruits in the produce department, while bananas are largest when ranked by pounds sold.

Total US Retail Organic Fresh Fruit Sales % Change 2007 - 2008			
Product	\$ Sales	Lbs Sold	Retail Price
Apples	18.8%	41.0%	11.8%
Avocados	38.5%	40.8%	12.8%
Bananas	25.3%	48.2%	11.3%
Berries	34.1%	123.6%	12.6%
Cherries	54.5%	94.3%	15.9%
Grapes	13.5%	85.1%	11.5%
Melons	-18.4%	-9.6%	3.2%
Oranges	29.2%	47.1%	-7.1%
Peaches	51.7%	148.3%	7.1%
Pineapple	14.5%	104.6%	-6.4%
All Other	22.3%	49.4%	9.6%
Total	25.0%	53.5%	11.4%

Source: FreshLook Marketing

Unfortunately, retailers do not always realize the price premium between the organic and conventional produce item at the register. Unlike packaged goods with UPCs that are scanned at the checkout for an accurate ring every time, random weight perishable produce items still rely on the cashiers to key in the correct PLU code for the right price. While expediting the purchases of busy consumers, it is

difficult for a cashier ringing large numbers of items to differentiate between organic and conventional bananas.

To ensure retailers do not lose any banana revenue and to avoid confusion at the check stand, Dole has developed an attractive band to wrap around



DON'T FORGET SPECIALTY BANANAS

The banana category is dominated by the mighty yellow Cavendish, 96.9% of US banana category sales to be precise. However opportunities for growth lie in a small sliver of the banana category.

According to FreshLook Marketing data, plantain dollar sales increased 19% in 2008



organic banana clusters. The band prominently highlights ORGANIC and the PLU code, making it easier for cashiers to identify it.

In parallel, the industry is now making strides toward the adoption of a new barcode: the GS1 DataBar. The DataBar is encoded with a 14-digit GTIN (global trade identification number) that identifies the product and its supplier and also distinguishes from conventional and organic. This bar is small enough to fit on bananas and most other products, and ensures the correct price is charged to the consumer.

Having cashiers scan the DataBar on a banana instead of entering a PLU will allow retailers to ring the correct price for organic bananas and not lose any revenue at the check stand. Wal-Mart and Loblaws are already scanning the DataBar in some stores. Your Dole representative can assist you to maximize organic banana sales and reduce shrink due to misidentified product at the checkout stand.

compared to 2006, up 15% alone from 2007. Plantains comprised 2.9% of banana category sales in 2008. Future plantain sales growth is expected as Hispanic populations continue to grow and spread out throughout the US.

Sales of Manzanos, aka the Apple Banana, have also soared 63.1% over the past two years, and 15% in 2008 over 2007. Sales of Niños, aka Baby bananas, declined last year, and red bananas sales in 2008 were flat.

Frequently, these specialty bananas are merchandised as mere decoration on the banana display. Make sure specialty bananas are clearly visible, in good condition, and merchandised with point of sale material that provides consumers with sufficient information on how to select and best enjoy these exotic treats.

These tasty varieties can add excitement and color to your produce department as well as generate additional margins. Your Dole representative can help customize a specialty banana program tailored to the demographic makeup of your stores.



Make Every Day Shine™



Dole Food Company is committed to providing you with the finest fresh fruit and vegetables available. For over 100 years, Dole has set the “gold standard” for quality and safety. That promise has never changed.

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EXPANDABLE CONSUMABLE

Expandable consumable is a marketing term that describes the product as consumable, like food, as opposed to durable, like a washing machine. Expandable means that there are opportunities to increase consumption, user base or usage of the product. Expandable consumable is the perfect definition of the berry category. Not only are berries of all types consumables, but they are rapidly consumed — completely consumed within days of purchase. That is why very few products in your supermarket offer virtually unlimited opportunities to increase sales and profits like the berry category.

USER PROFILE

Each berry in the category has its own user base and consumption profile with opportunities for continued growth. Strawberries are the largest of the berry items. They have an almost universal user base — over 94 percent! The way to grow the use of strawberries is to increase consumption. Over the years, data shows that, as long as strawberries are available, great tasting and of good quality, consumers will keep buying them. People who like to put strawberries on their cereal in the morning will do so twelve months out of the year, every day if they can. Per capita consumption of strawberries is at 6.1 pounds and still growing — up 50% in the last decade.¹

Blueberries are one of the fastest growing produce items in both expansion of the user base and

per capita consumption. Even with this great increase in demand, the user base for blueberries is almost 75 percent² and per capita is 0.6 pounds¹ — still a long way from reaching full growth potential.

Raspberries and blackberries may both be on the steepest growth curve. Raspberry consumption, for example, has increased four and a half times this decade.¹ Both are extremely popular with berry lovers, but per capita and user base for both berries have unlimited growth potential — as long as they are available, delicious and well merchandised.

Sources: 1. USDA/EMS data, 2. High Bush Blueberry Council



THE BERRY PATCH DYNAMO

Why don't we put all of these very popular, high growth, high velocity, expandable- consumables in one spot in the produce department and see what happens? Savvy produce marketers have been doing so with phenomenal results. Berry patch displays are becoming a destination spot in most supermarkets. The result is one of the highest dollar-and profits-per-square-foot locations in the store. And, again, we are talking about expandable-consumable so there are increased sales and profits to be gained with an aggressive Berry Patch strategy.

WAYS TO PUMP UP THE VOLUME

Driscoll's believes that the first step to increase the volume, sales and consumer satisfaction is to use a branded Berry Patch approach. Driscoll's mission is to continually delight berry consumers. That means focusing on flavor, texture, appearance, aroma — everything that gives the consumer a delightful eating experience with every berry, every day. With



year-round availability of Driscoll's strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries continuing to grow, you can count on Driscoll's great quality and distinctive flavor every day.

Another great strategy is to move the berry patch from the store to the home. Buy one get one free (BOGO) is a frequent promotional strategy. Try expanding that concept to multiple berry purchases — buy two raspberries and get a strawberry free. When customers try the idea of buying and using multiple berries in common situations — on cereal in the morning or with cottage cheese as a snack — they will continue to do so even when not on promotion.



PRODUCE MERCHANTISER'S DREAM

Indeed, the berry category is a produce merchandiser's best dream – a product that people love, buy and use quickly, and come back to buy more. A branded, destination Berry Patch display featuring Driscoll's berries gives even more potential to a rapidly expanding, profitable category.



*Raspberry Goat Cheese Salad (above) and
Mixed Berry and Cheese Crostini (below)*



LET'S TALK ABOUT HEALTHY EATING

And, the good news keeps coming in about all of the berries in the category. Strawberries are low in calories with no fat and a huge daily contribution of antioxidants. Blueberries are well known for their nutritional benefits and research continues to show that raspberries and blackberries may have even more health benefits.

SAFETY FIRST

In addition to producing berries that delight consumers, Driscoll's berries are grown with the highest standards of care and food safety possible. All independent farmers around the world that grow Driscoll's berries must adhere to the same strict GAP and GlobalGAP guidelines enforced by a rigorous system of internal and independent third-party audits – second to none in the produce industry.



BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Receive berries directly into refrigerated warehouses.

If berries arrive wrapped in plastic, remove the plastic immediately.

Optimal temperature for berries is between 32° to 34° F with humidity levels at 90 to 95 percent.

Transport to the store on refrigerated trucks.

Quickly move berries from the loading dock to the cold storage room.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Keep your berries refrigerated from the receiving dock to the shelf.

Keep berries dry. Any moisture will hasten breakdown, shorten shelf life and shrink sales.

Make sure your Berry Patch display is fully stocked at all times.

Remove packages with leaky or moldy berries. One bad berry package will impact your sales and store image.





Set Yourself Apart
with **Driscoll's**





Create a Driscoll's Berry Patch in your produce department...

and watch the results stack up—and profits grow!

Consumers are passionate about fresh berries. Show that you are, too, by creating a power-packed display of Driscoll's premium fresh conventional and organic berries. A year-round, destination Driscoll's "berry patch" in place will generate category sales far exceeding national averages.

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RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Carrots are among the categories that have most benefited from the value-added revolution. The merchandising opportunities available have led to dramatic increases in carrot category volumes, which justify substantial attention being paid to the proper merchandising and marketing of carrots. Some key display points:

- 1) Carrots sell best when they receive a high-visibility central display that includes the full range of carrot items plus a generous secondary display in the produce department, tying into similar items and being used as color breaks throughout the department.
- 2) The main carrot display should include baby carrots, microwavable petite carrots for cooking, carrot chips, carrot Stixx, crinkle-cut coins, shredded carrots, multipack baby carrots and Carrot Dippers snack packs, jumbo carrots, table carrots, cello carrots, bunch carrots with tops.
- 3) A large secondary display with other value-added produce should include baby carrots, carrot chips, carrot Stixx, crinkle cut coins, shredded carrot and microwavable petite carrots for cooking.
- 4) In addition, both baby carrots and table carrots, with their natural orange color, should serve as a terrific color break for use throughout the department.
- 5) Don't forget to include carrots as part of your organic display. Bunny Luv and Cal-Organic brands offer 52-week-a-year availability of a large range of certified organic carrots. Organic carrots consistently rank among the top selling organic items.

QUICK TIPS

Carry the full variety of value-added Grimmway carrot products.

Emphasize the healthful attributes of carrots.

Display carrots in multiple locations in the store.

- 6) Salad bars also benefit from a full complement of carrot items. Grimmway offers foodservice packs perfect for putting baby carrots, carrot chips, carrot Crisps and shredded carrots in any salad bar.
- 7) Finally, all juicing programs require fresh carrots to be a success – the sweet juice of the carrot makes it a perennial favorite for those ordering fresh juices.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE / SIGNAGE

Carrots are a naturally healthful snack. Let consumers know that the top messages are:

- All natural
- No fat, no cholesterol
- The kid-friendly vegetable™

Channel strips are an excellent way to grab the shoppers' attention. At Grimmway.com, we offer a range of point-of-sale material including a set of 1x 8-inch strips to add eye-catching clarity to your carrot displays.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Grimmway Carrots are available year-round with consistent quality. California's abundant sunshine and range of growing areas produce approximately 85 percent of the nation's carrots.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Due to their brilliant orange color, carrots can be part of eye-catching displays.

Carrots and carrot products are appropriate for sampling. You can keep up with Grimmway's latest ad campaigns on our Web site: Grimmway.com.

DISPLAY, CARE AND HANDLING

With bulk carrots, maintain temperatures from 33° to 35° F with relative humidity of 98 to 100 percent. Bulk carrots can be lightly misted but are ethylene-sensitive and should not be stored or transported with ethylene-producing items as they give carrots an off flavor.

The tops of bunched carrots should be fluffed to maintain air circulation. Beware that the tops draw moisture from the carrots themselves and will cause these carrots to have a shorter shelf life.

If the exterior of carrots starts to appear white, dunk them in ice water to freshen the carrots.

Maintaining the cold chain is of prime importance with value-added carrots including baby carrots.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Carrots and fresh-cut carrots are traditionally cross-merchandised with dips and salad dressings; one can also use peanut butter, yogurt, etc.

Carrot cake is a favorite for everyone. So cross-merchandise with all the ingredients. Sample carrot-cake cupcakes and give out a recipe.

Soups and stews create many cross-merchandising opportunities. And signage indicating that any salad can be enhanced with carrots is always a good idea.

Finally, don't forget to suggest carrot curls as a garnish with holiday meals.



OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Merchandise carrots in the deli next to fresh roasted chickens and other ready-to-eat items to integrate a healthful, colorful, vegetable meal-solution display.

Put carrots in the meat case next to the assortment of ready-to-cook meal items to remind consumers to serve healthful fresh carrots with their protein-based main course.

A display of baby carrots at the seafood counter reminds consumers of the need for a fresh vegetable with their fine fish.



the Very Versatile Carrot



Babies

The "Good For You" snack

- ✓ Great for lunches
- ✓ High in Vitamin A



Whole

The "Do It Yourself" carrot

- ✓ Use in stews & soups
- ✓ Adds color to meals

Shredded

The "Salad Maker"

- ✓ Great as a salad topper
- ✓ Try added to a sandwich



Chips, Sticks & Coins

The "Entertainers"

- ✓ Snack 'em or Dip 'em
- ✓ Great for holidays & parties



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The "Side Dish Kings"

- ✓ Cooks in minutes
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DUDA FARM FRESH FOODS, INC.

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VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Nobody knows celery like Duda Farm Fresh Food, Inc. Since 1926, when we brought our first commercial crop of celery to market, we've grown to become one of the world's most successful producers and processors of agricultural products. Considered to be the largest celery growers in the world our reputation stands on the research and development of new and exciting celery varieties. Through our celery research program Duda Farm Fresh Foods is generating 1,000 to 1,200 lines of celery a year, focusing on characteristics such as flavor, nutrition, texture and appearance. Consumers benefit from Duda Farm Fresh Foods years of celery breeding expertise.

Today we grow Dandy® brand celery from one of our many proprietary varieties, specifically adapted to our regional growing conditions. Our year-round availability provides options for regional specific programs supplying sustainable options for retailers.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Research on celery destination shows consumers are looking for convenience in their shopping trips.



Merchandising can help provide this convenience by locating celery products adjacent to one another. Whole celery, hearts, sticks and branches located in the same display space make it easy for consumers to find and make selections.

There are two types of celery consumers – those consuming celery primarily as a snack and those using it as an ingredient in recipes. The snackers are helping grow the value-added segment as celery sticks are gaining in popularity. This presents a great opportunity for retailers to increase their celery business through sticks, sticks with dips, and snack packs for lunch boxes.

Research also indicates consumers in general would like to see more choices and new product options for celery like Dandy® brand washed and ready-to-eat celery sticks and trimmed, washed and ready-to-use Dandy® celery branches.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Celery is a natural and healthy snack. Key health messages on in-store signage should include:

- * Naturally Fat Free
- * Naturally Cholesterol Free
- * A Low Sodium Food
- * Good Source of Vitamins A, C and K
- * Good Source of Dietary Fiber

Channel strips and danglers are a great way to grab your shoppers' attention. Consider offering these in multiple languages if that makes sense for your store demographics. Duda Farm Fresh Foods will help you customize in-store display signage.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Back page advertisements and the buy one get one free (BOGO) promotions are the most effective type and result in large dollar and volume lifts and positively impact the entire category.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Maintain temperatures from 32 to 36° F with relative humidity of 90-98 percent. Bulk celery may be lightly misted to maintain freshness but are ethylene sensitive and should be kept away from ethylene

producing fruits. Celery tends to absorb odors from other commodities and should not be stored or transported with apples or onions.

If discolored or damaged, ribs should be removed from the stalk. If celery appears white at the ends or limp submerge in ice water to freshen. Maintaining the cold chain is of utmost importance in keeping celery fresh and crunchy.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Traditional cross merchandising items for celery include fresh dips and salad dressings. Peanut butter, caramel, and chocolate work well as additional items.

Hand out recipes for traditional celery stuffing during the holidays and merchandise all the recipe ingredients together. For an everyday recipe item such as peanut butter stuffed celery with raisins, merchandise the recipe items alongside the celery category items.

A mirepoix mix, consisting of diced celery, onions and carrots is at the heart of countless flavorful recipes, from stocks and sauces to hearty soups, stews and braised meats and casseroles. A mirepoix is used all over the world to build the first layer of flavor in many familiar specialties. Providing this tip near the celery, onions or carrots and tips on knife skills and proportional dicing of vegetables will show the cooker how these items further fit into their lifestyle.



OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Shoppers of celery are cooks or snackers. To capitalize on the cooker consumer category, cross-promote private branded eggs, sugar, flour, or milk since these tend to be basic staples in the cook's kitchen.

Center-of-the-plate proteins (meat or deli counter) offer a great way to cross promote for this category as well.

The snackers category would enjoy seeing celery next to the fresh dips and salad dressings.



ROOTED IN QUALITY.



The pursuit of excellence never ends. At Duda Farm Fresh Foods, we're always looking to improve our products, our processes and our services. We start by listening to consumers to find out what they want. Take our pre-cut celery products, for example: with consumer input as a guide, we developed and patented better tasting celery varieties, and then we implemented water jet technology to process and seal in crispness. We also initiated DNA fingerprinting to assure our customers are getting the correct varieties—time after time after time. For first-quality fruits and vegetables, contact Duda Farm Fresh Foods at 866-792-DUDA or duda.com.



Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of DUDA. Distributed exclusively by Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc., duda.com



DOMEX SUPERFRESH GROWERS

151 Low Road, Yakima, WA 98908

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Website: www.superfreshcherries.com Email: lqueen@superfreshgrowers.com



Sweet cherries remain one of the few truly seasonal items and are viewed by consumers as “an affordable luxury”. For many consumers, cherries signify that an exciting time of year has arrived — a time of picnics, barbecues and other fun outdoor activities with the family. So make sure you let them know when cherries are available. Large displays, signs and feature ads are money well spent on this amazing growth category.

CHERRY CATEGORY PERFORMANCE

Cherries are the #1 selling produce item in terms of sales per square foot of retail space. In the month of June, weekly per store cherry dollar sales for each square foot of display space outsell the 2nd leading produce item by 194%! In the month of July, cherries outsell the 2nd leading produce item by 96%. This translates into category contributions that average nearly 7% across the United States for the month of July. Many retailers enjoy cherry category contributions of over 10%.

Domestic per capita cherry consumption continues to grow. Widening popularity amongst consumers and a growth in understanding of the tremendous health benefits associated with cherries have contributed to a 400% growth in per capita cherry consumption over the last 12 years. Despite this impressive growth, cherries continue to have a very low penetration rate, indicating tremendous opportunity for continued growth.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Nothing attracts attention and generates sales like a large cherry display. The display should be well signed and placed at the front of the department in your primary selling location. During the peak of the season, a secondary display toward the back of the department will generate additional sales.

Make sure you offer a mix of dark sweet cherries and delicious Rainier cherries. Rainiers continue to grow in popularity each year, and are critical to successful cherry category sales. Also offer a choice of cherry packaging options: large clamshells for heavy users and 2-pound bags for those who prefer less.

Finally, the key to a great cherry display is to

QUICK TIPS

Provide an assortment of packaging — all consumers are not alike.

Promote cherries in a high-traffic area — their seasonality creates excitement.

Promote dark sweets and Rainier together — they make a great team.

have cherries for the entire season. Cherry season now extends for multiple weeks; plan early to lock-in your supplies and work closely with Domex Superfresh Growers for merchandising ideas, point-of-sale materials and packaging opportunities.

POINT OF PURCHASE SIGNAGE

Since cherries are seasonal, it is important to remind your customers when cherries are back. This can be done through in-store signage, circulars and in-store radio/TV. In fact, studies show that in-store radio and TV can increase sales of cherries by as much as 14%. Signage is also a great way to educate your customers about special items such as Rainier cherries, extra large cherries and more. The Rainier cherry demands a premium price, and a quick sign identifying its super sweetness and unique color can help drive sales.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Domex Superfresh Growers cherries are available from May into mid-August. While the primary variety remains the Bing, there are several other dark sweet cherries that help extend the season on the front and tail ends. The Rainier cherry is typically available from June 25th through July 25th — a small window with huge opportunity. It is imperative that you run ads promoting Rainier cherries during this period, and increase shelf space by at least 25% to realize the category's maximum lift potential. Make sure to offer your customers a

premium large Rainier cherry. Although the per-pound price might be more, consumers who experience them keep coming back for more during the entire season.

AD FREQUENCY

Success in your cherry program involves scheduling ads and setting pricing goals before the season begins. This will help you realize maximum category performance and keep your cherry supplies dependable. As the crop can vary widely year-to-year it is important to look at what each season can offer.

A SUPERFRESH CHERRY IS SUPER HEALTHY

The health message continues to drive consumer purchasing decisions and this “sweet health” message is a great tool to reach out to shoppers concerned about a healthy lifestyle. A University of California study revealed mechanistic evidence suggesting that specific anti-oxidants found in sweet cherries can modulate oxidant stress and inflammation associated with ailments such as gout and arthritis. Likewise, cherries are a good source of potassium, Vitamin C and fiber.

DISPLAY

The cold chain is king when it comes to cherries. Keep cherries in your cold room until they're ready to be displayed. If a refrigerated display is not an option, make sure you properly rotate your supplies and put cherries back into the cold room in the evening.

Display cherries in your high traffic area. Allow ample shelf space in that high-traffic area and steadily rotate your supplies during the course of the day. Maintaining an ample supply of cherries is critical for a successful cherry season; your cherry plan needs to include securing supplies from early June into early August.

BACKROOM CARE AND HANDLING

KEEP CHERRIES COLD. The higher the storage temperature, the shorter the shelf life. In fact, internal fruit quality drops more in 1 hour at 68° F (20° C) than in 24 hours at 32° F (0° C).

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Place cherry clamshells in the dairy section next to the yogurt — a delicious snack for low-fat diets.

Run a summertime cherry promotion using clamshells or bags — they're ready-to-go for family outings.

Offer samples of Rainier cherries to drive sales — one taste and the higher cost won't affect consumers' decisions.

Run a “Superfresh Cherry” ad featuring larger sized cherries.



Jerry Mertz,
Monson Fruit, Selah, WA.
Domex Superfresh Grower

Point A to point-of-sale. At the *speed* of fresh.

At Domex Superfresh Growers®, we go to great lengths to ensure you receive quality cherries. From growing to harvest to state-of-the-art packing, we've mastered the logistics of moving large cherry volumes from orchard to store as quickly and carefully as possible to optimize freshness. For fresh-picked cherries packed to meet your unique needs, pick Domex Superfresh Growers.



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RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Working with beautiful product such as chili peppers makes it easier to find successful ways of displaying and increasing chili pepper sales. There are a variety of ways you may find chili peppers highlighted in a store – separated into baskets on a wet rack or perhaps piled high on an end cap. Each of these display techniques provides opportunities. Dividing chili peppers into baskets allows for clear labeling of each variety, while a large display of one variety on an end cap works well in an area with a larger Hispanic or Asian population. A best practice for displaying chili peppers is placing them near bell peppers and presenting chilies all together highlighting the variety and their rich colors.

Another great way to introduce or acquaint customers with chili peppers is to package a variety of peppers together. Personalize a customer's experience by including a usage guide/recipe. This will serve as an effective way to share the variety of heat levels, color, and variety.

SUGGESTED SIGNAGE/POS

Chilies come in a variety of sizes, colors, and heat levels. Store signage and POS highlighting heat level are effective ways to help customers identify the variety and the intensity of spiciness. Recipes, care and handling guides, and health benefits are other unique ways to capture additional sales and spark creativity among shoppers. A bit of information to help educate the customer can go a long way – something as simple as a reminder to wear gloves when slicing, dicing, and deseeding hotter varieties will prevent customers from having an unpleasant prepping experience.

Education can also go a long way with your sales staff. Be sure to keep them educated on pepper varieties. Popular cooking magazines often highlight many unique pepper varieties, which often encourage shoppers to ask their friendly grocery staff. Keep updated to ensure optimal sales.

When recommending the perfect peppers for meal ideas, choose peppers that have firm and shiny skin, and avoid soft spots or ones that are shriveled. Also, remove peppers that have black stems as this is an indication of old age. Other hot tips include reminding customers to drink milk if they happen to indulge in a spicy pepper. Chili peppers come in a wide range of spiciness; therefore, it is important to

QUICK TIPS

Think outside the box, place peppers everywhere throughout the store.

Don't feel as if you have to segregate chili peppers; group them together and show off their colors, shapes, and variety.

Check the demographics of your area; then you will know what peppers are best to feature.

break previous misconceptions of all chili peppers being hot. Signage is an effective way to communicate heat level and encourage shy customers to try a new variety.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Chili peppers are available year round and lend themselves to colorful displays. Originating in South America, they are grown throughout the U.S., Mexico, and Central America.

While there are many varieties, here is a sampling of various varieties:

- Banana
- Hungarian Wax
- Anaheim
- Poblano (also known as the Pasilla)
- Yellow Hot
- Jalapeno
- Red Fresno
- Serrano
- Thai
- Habanero

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

The Super Bowl revs up excitement for teamwork and snack foods. Jalapeno poppers, spicy guacamole, Habanero salsa, nachos with Jalapeno slices, and specialty drinks like the Flaming Jalapeno are sure to liven up any party.

Color each season with chili peppers – deck the halls with green and red chili peppers during Christmas, inspire the festivities of the Chinese New Year with red chili peppers, and decorate to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with an array of green chili peppers. Any holiday becomes more exciting whether it is Cinco de Mayo or Christmas.

Highlight a few features of the super chili pepper: Battling a powerful migraine or sinus headache, chili peppers to the rescue...the natural occurring capsaicin (chemical that makes chili peppers hot) aids in reducing pain by affecting the brain's main pain transmitter.

Power healer, capsaicin, fights nasal congestion and chronic sinus infections – a great way to help customers through the flu season. Be sure to recommend making a tea or lozenges with chili peppers to combat that pesky sore throat.

The benefits of capsaicin do not end in the flu season...capsaicin is also beneficial in fighting cancer. Cancer studies supported by the National Cancer Institute indicate that capsaicin acts as natural inhibitors in the cancer process.

Support any New Year's resolution or diet plan by promoting the natural benefit chili peppers have to burn body fat. Chili peppers turn up the heat by being a natural thermogenic and increasing metabolism and generating heat.

Reducing high blood pressure and cholesterol, loaded with more vitamin C than an orange, and the potential to keep your feet warm in the winter are additional benefits of this super food.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Chili peppers are easy to handle; they require no misting, and typically have a shelf life of 14 to 21 days. Fresh chili peppers are best received and kept at 38 to 44° F with a relative humidity of 60 – 70%.

Avoid rough handling as damaged chilies will decay rapidly.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Bell peppers complement chili peppers beautifully. They are a part of the same family, come in an array of colors and make for great partners in meals and on the shelf. Placing Jalapenos near avocados, tomatoes, onions, garlic, and cilantro give customers an upper hand in guacamole and salsa preparations.

Chili peppers also go hand in hand with limes. Not only are they utilized in salsa and guacamole, but they are a perfect match for Baja style tacos, marinades, fajitas, or adding any additional flavor. Poblano peppers placed near cheese give customers incentive to make chili rellenos. Grab Anaheim or Banana peppers and link them to the meat department for a great recipe to make stuffed peppers. Spice up lemonade with Jalapenos or add some flare to nacho fixings.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Chili pepper eating contest

It is clear that chili peppers can spice up any department by variety, color, and heat level. They also lend themselves well to food demonstrations. Get interactive and feature a chili pepper eating contest for brave customers. Pacifico beer featured an advertising campaign that highlighted chili peppers in pepper roulette.



OUR TEAM OF MERCHANDISERS KEEP THE CHILIES HOT.



Often success is dictated by who you know as much as what you know. That's true when it comes to merchandising a category like Chilies, where having a supplier with year-round quality and unique expertise means consistent and managed performance. The Coast Caliente program is a turnkey, customized mix of product, including our proprietary Tremendo Jalapeno pepper, and consumer-centric merchandising support. We have a dedicated team of merchandisers that work hand-in-hand with our retail partners to recommend and implement effective in-store solutions that help spice up the chili display. Let us tell you more about our Coast Caliente program at www.coastproduce.com or 213-955-4900.

STRENGTHENING YOUR PRODUCE SUPPLY CHAIN





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DNE
World Fruit Sales

YEAR-ROUND SUPPLIES AND PROFITS

With the availability of great tasting citrus year-round, retailers now have the opportunity to grow citrus sales and profits significantly. Navel oranges from Florida complemented by imported summer navels from Australia and South Africa lead the way for a full year of navel profits. Clementines with their nearly year round availability are imported from Chile (mid May – Aug), South Africa (available June-Sept), Morocco and Spain (Oct – Feb). They continue to be very popular with all ages because they are easy to peel and virtually seedless.

Specialty items such as Minneolas in the summer from Australia and South Africa and during the winter from Florida along with a full line of Tangerines (Fall-glos, Sunburst and Honeys) can bring even more profits to the line up. And finally, delicious juice oranges from Florida are available during most of the winter season for your customers who love fresh squeezed orange juice.

Florida and Texas grapefruit offer consumers the best tasting grapefruit available in the world. Peak flavor often comes in January and February. However, fruit is eating well as early as late October to November depending on the season. Pre-Christmas large sized fruit always seems to sell better. After the holidays through the cold

winter months, a 3- or 5-pound bag offers a good value and convenient way to take home some vitamin C, and they mix well in fruit salads or for cooking.

The lemon and lime category is growing with a nearly year round supply from Mexico, Florida and California.



PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Promoting citrus regularly will help boost citrus sales. Create awareness by designing themed ads (such as National Grapefruit Month) that promote the variety in season and the benefits of including fresh citrus into your daily diet. Consumers are looking for diversity and there are enough different citrus varieties to have a weekly citrus ad with a different item.

It is important to provide an assortment of packaging to maximize your sales. Offer both bulk and bags to appeal to the different consumer segments; some consumers like to pick their own fruit and feel they are getting value while your convenient oriented shoppers find bagged produce appealing.

Since 75% of customers' buying decisions are made in the store, in-store sampling is a key way to promote and sell citrus. Sampling stimulates trial, builds awareness, generates a sales lift and increases repeat purchasers. Roughly 25% of consumers who sample the product will become buyers.

Focus your promotions during the peak flavor periods to meet the needs of the consumer by offering good quality tasting fruit to entice them to become repeat buyers.

DISPLAYS

Consumers today are looking for valued added information pertaining to the product such as where it was grown, health benefits, serving suggestions and nutritional value. It is important to include this information in your signage or POS materials.

Proper displays are an important vehicle for increasing sales. Create a visually pleasing display of multiple citrus varieties in season that are well organized with informative signage. Always keep displays well stocked and rotate the fruit throughout the display.



CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Showcasing citrus through promotions and cross-merchandising attracts consumers to the category and maximizes sales. At DNE we offer opportunities to cross merchandise with Ocean Spray juices. This not only increases product sold during the promotion but also grows both of the categories by introducing fresh citrus to the juice consumers and Ocean Spray branded juice to the fresh citrus consumer. It is a win win situation.

Right after New Year's it's a great time to cross promote the Ocean Spray Grapefruit juices with the 5# bags of Ocean Spray fresh grapefruit either from Florida or Texas. It's during the cold and flu season and kicks off a diet program as well for the New Year.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX
PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Conduct contests or promotional give-aways to drive traffic and increase sales.

Use child-friendly packaging to attract children to the product while promoting healthful eating. Mothers will buy food items that their children want and that are nutritionally good for them.

QUICK TIPS

Promote citrus during its Peak Flavor

Offer both Bulk and Bagged Citrus

Conduct in-store sampling

Provide recipe and usage suggestions

DNE



World Fruit Sales



www.dneworld.com
800-327-6676



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RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Cucumbers offer an unusual opportunity because, although the core of the category functions as a high-volume staple item, a basic building block of the salad, other parts of the category function as high-margin specialty items.

The key to maximizing cucumber sales and profits is large bulk displays of the basic salad cucumber accented with special varieties.

Large bulk displays of slicing cucumbers typically should be placed near lettuce and other salad ingredients. When lettuce prices are high, consumer substitution can occur, so extra large and supplemental displays may be required as well as careful attention to restocking of the displays.

The rich green color of the cucumber also makes it a perfect color mate to radishes, carrots and other colored vegetables.

Although slicing cucumbers traditionally are sold in bulk, film-wrapped packages containing several smaller cucumbers and, more recently, mesh bags filled with several cucumbers are often good sellers. Together they create interest in a familiar staple.

Sales also can be boosted with additional varieties. English/hothouse varieties – elongated, seedless versions of traditional slicing cucumbers – add a note of elegance and interest to the category and often support higher margins.

Kirby dills and other varieties can be marketed specifically for pickling and make a store appear to be a variety leader. In certain areas they can actually drive consumer store choice.

The growth in fresh-cut has created a double opportunity for merchandising cucumbers. First, fresh-cut cucumbers can be included in crudité trays, and packages of cut cucumber can be sold on their own as a snack.

In addition, retailers have found success with a secondary display near the fresh-cut lettuce packages, often involving cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, onions and mushrooms, thus reminding consumers to add ingredients to fresh-cut mixes.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Consumers may appreciate a quick tip to keep partially used cucumbers fully wrapped so as to extend the life of the product.

QUICK TIPS

Always have cucumbers positioned near both the bulk salad items and the bagged salad mixes.

Use the rich green color of cucumbers as part of a color break.

Signage near the fresh-cuts reminding consumers to add zest to fresh-cut salad mixes boost sales of cucumbers and other salad ingredients

Signage near the fresh-cuts reminding consumers to add zest to fresh-cut salad mixes boost sales of cucumbers and other salad ingredients.

Pickling cucumbers can be profitably accented with a small reproduction pickle barrel filled with instructions on pickling.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

The U.S. grade system for field grown cucumbers is as follows: U.S. Fancy, U.S. Extra 1, U.S. 1, U.S. 1 Small, U.S. 1 Large, U.S. 2. However, the trade typically identifies the cucumbers as Super Select, Select, Small Super, Small, Large and Plain. These terms do not refer to any USDA grade standard but are common lingo in the industry. Buyers should be cautious to understand what standards they are actually purchasing.

Cucumbers are available year-round. Florida, which produces a majority of the U.S. commercial cucumber crop, ships all year except for a brief lull in summer. Mexico is typically the largest supply source for cucumbers, with especially heavy imports in winter and spring. Canada produces a significant share of the English/hothouse cucumbers consumed in the United States. Most states produce cucumbers at some time of the year.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Because cucumbers can be eaten by themselves, they make an excellent choice for demos and sampling with salad dressings.

The key to promoting cucumbers is to build up consumption through the three basic usages:

1) Snacking – With weight loss on the minds of so many, snacking on a cucumber is a great choice. Not only are they better than chips and cookies, but they also contain fewer calories than a traditional snack fruit.

2) Salads – This is the No.1 use for cucumbers. The more interesting salad ideas retailers put out there, the more cucumbers sell.

3) Foods – Cucumbers can be cut up and breaded, they can be turned into baked cucumber boats with selections of cheeses, bread crumbs and proteins, etc. Chilled cucumber soup is a summer treat. Remember, ideas spark usage. If you suggest new ways to enjoy them, consumers will try the idea.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS/ DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Cucumbers should be maintained at 45° to 50° F. Of particular importance is adequate humidity – 90 to 95 percent – as cucumbers can shrivel as a result of moisture loss. Most cucumbers are waxed to retard this loss of moisture. Misting, however, is not recommended for cucumbers, as sitting water can result in spotting, pitting and even tissue collapse.

Generally, attractively shaped, deep green colored, firm feeling cucumbers are the choice of consumers. If the cucumber is yellow, it is generally overripe.

Cucumbers are sensitive to ethylene and highly sensitive to injury from freezing.

Cross-Merchandising Opportunities

- All Salad Items
- Bagged Salads
- Salad Dressings
- Dips

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Demo cucumber cooking ideas such as deep fried cucumber slices served with tangy horseradish sauce or hot mustard.

Showcase a fleet of baked and raw cucumber boats. Show baked ones filled with melted cheeses or meats. Show raw boats filled with cream cheese or cold salads including tuna salad, egg salad, chicken salad, lobster salad etc.

Encourage cucumber snacking by sampling cucumber slices right in the department. They are addictive.



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With Quality...*

**... But Exceptional Results
Are The Only Measurement**

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Apio Inc. is the recognized industry supplier of value-added fresh-cut vegetables and a category growth leader at retail, offering a complete selection of Eat Smart® brand fresh-cut vegetables in a variety of product sizes and configurations. When your focus is on results, now more than ever, go with a name you know will outperform the rest. Nationally, Eat Smart sells the fastest and has contributed \$580 per million of total store sales, exceeding our closest competitor by \$162 (AC Nielsen MarketTrack data, 52 weeks ending 11/29/08).

SUPERIOR QUALITY

At Apio, we take pride in our extensive quality assurance and food safety programs. Our food safety program from field to consumer includes post harvest physiologists on staff, a microbiological lab on premises, annual third party and retail food safety quality audits, a complete HACCP program, vendor certification program, GAP and GMP/ Food Safety Training Programs as well as a California Leafy Greens Agreement signatory. Apio also utilizes proprietary Breatheway® modified atmosphere technology. A patented temperature switch feature adjusts membrane permeability to compensate for mild fluctuations in the cold chain and extends shelf life naturally by providing ideal package atmosphere. Breatheway helps to reduce shrink and increase sales, as well as provide a better eating experience.

DISPLAY STRATEGIES

Creating a prominent fresh-cut vegetable section within the produce department is a key component to driving sales in the category. Whether it is a 4-foot vertical, a 4-foot with half, maybe two or three shelves – whatever quantity of fresh cut products that are sold best – it is important to display them separate from the salad category. Our research has shown that consumers looking to purchase fresh cut

QUICK TIPS

Create a prominent fresh-cut vegetable section. The best place is alongside the same commodities sold in bulk.

Focus on the category and develop periodic promotions and display tactics that maximize sales.

Frequent promotions and cross merchandising keep fresh cut top of mind and bring new users to the category.

vegetables don't look in the same area where bagged salads are kept. The best place is actually alongside the same commodities sold in bulk. Consider eye-catching channel strips or shelf talkers to draw attention. Generate interest with periodic new product introductions and a variety of sizes – like Apio's new 18-ounce value pack.

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONS

To make the most of peak holiday periods and special events, display Eat Smart Party Trays near the front of the produce section to stimulate incremental sales. To maximize impulse "special occasion" sales, promote larger format Eat Smart Party Trays, which are available with beef, turkey and cheese for added variety. Year-round, offer smaller format trays as a healthful snack item for the office, home or as a "grab and go" alternative to chips and soda.

Our patented flip tray design, which includes a rigid serving base unmatched in both durability and convenience, has contributed to Apio being the #1

selling party tray in the U.S. with 29 percent market share.

THE KEY IS FOCUS!

One store program that applies periodic display strategies during peak periods saw volume triple in the first year, and has seen consistent increases between 20-25 percent annually.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Over 40 Eat Smart fresh-cut bags, salads, trays and salads – including popular dips, dressings and ingredients – are available every day, 365 days a year. New items include 18-ounce value pack medleys and vegetable-based salads, which offer more antioxidant power than lettuce-based salads.

RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Fresh-cut vegetables should be received from adequately refrigerated trucks and transferred immediately into storage rooms ideally cooled to 33° to 38° F. Shelves should be well stocked and products culled with attention to code date.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Promoting fresh-cut vegetables with center-of-plate items such as poultry or fish helps shoppers quickly identify healthful solutions for their entire family. A few key ingredients such as a bag of Eat Smart fresh-cut vegetables paired with whole grains, lean meat and spices can open the door to a variety of custom-tailored meal options. In addition, Eat Smart Party Trays complement deli, meat and snack displays during peak holidays. Large cross-promotional displays featuring barbeque themes, tailgate parties, summer picnics or sporting events will entice shoppers to pick up all of their supplies for entertaining in one central location.

Innovative merchandising and cross promotions with refrigerated dips and dressings or slaws and salad toppers also keep focus on the category and increase the opportunity to bring in new users.



Eat Smart sells faster.

Which gives you more time to count your money.



Apio, INC.

Don't settle for less. In the U.S., Eat Smart® sells the *fastest* in the category and contributes \$580 per million of total store sales, exceeding the competition by \$173.* So while Eat Smart is ringing in the sale, you'll have more time to do what you enjoy most. Count your profits.

800-454-1355 • www.apioinc.com

*Source: AC Nielsen MarketTrack, 52 weeks ending 11/01/08.

Reader Service # 3



MAURICE A. AUERBACH, INC.

490 Huyler Street, South Hackensack, NJ 07606

Phone: 201-807-9292 Fax: 201-807-9596

Website: www.auerpak.com



RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Garlic lies at the confluence of all that is hot and happening in produce. Ethnic cuisines? Garlic is key. Health-oriented eaters? Garlic is prominent. Dieters? Garlic instead of salt anytime. It also is a product family that runs the gamut from staple to specialty items — red garlic, elephant garlic, peeled, packaged, braided and certified organic.

It is a category that includes both fresh garlic and various processed and semi-processed items, such as whole peeled garlic, chopped garlic, minced garlic and a multitude of jarred products. There are even garlic options that can serve highly decorative purposes — such as braided garlic. Garlic can also be used to adorn holiday wreaths and other holiday decorations. Many items are sold in both bulk and consumer package sizes.

The key to making good garlic displays is to avoid the specialty jinx in which a small area is set aside for a tiny row, or worse, a little basket of garlic. Instead, think of the romance of garlic: The Egyptians, Greeks and Romans all knew of garlic, and this rich heritage carries through to the cuisines of today, justifying generous space with a full range of garlic products displayed.

And it is well worth it to cultivate a garlic-buying clientele because garlic is never consumed alone. So every sale of garlic means the sale of other items both in produce and in other areas of the store.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Signage and POP material near garlic should always have a three-fold message: First, make sure to highlight variety items, such as elephant garlic; this attracts attention to the overall garlic section and sparks consumer interest. Second, always highlight the health benefits of garlic: fat-free, saturated fat-free, sodium-free, cholesterol-free and certified 100 percent organic are all watchwords that are permissible with garlic and attract the interest of health-oriented consumers. Third, always provide recipes and usage ideas.

Garlic is a product whose sales directly relate to consumers adopting recipes that require garlic, so always have one type being promoted. Also remem-

QUICK TIPS

Display and promote the full range of garlic items.

Use jarred and fresh garlic, red, white, elephant and conventional garlic and garlic braids to make the section intriguing to consumers.

Focus on increasing usage, as that is the key to increasing sales long term.

ber that a festive arrangement of garlic braids is great signage pointing to a garlic display.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Garlic is available year-round with supplies coming from California and outside of the United States, including Argentina, Mexico, Chile and Spain. In recent years, Chinese-grown garlic has become prominent in the marketplace. Its use as both a seasoning and an ingredient in food means that year-round promotion is appropriate.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Because of its comparatively long storage life, deep discounts on garlic are likely to steal sales from future periods. As such, the focus in garlic promotion should be on usage.

If it is barbeque season, promote the use of garlic in salads, marinades and rubs. Suggest that consumers try cooking whole garlic on the barbeque to serve whole as a butter substitute.

If the Super Bowl or another sporting event is coming up, do a promotion in which you suggest the use of fresh garlic to make salsa with a kick.

Salad dressing is a great garlic use. Have a salad dressing of the month that is always under promotion and always uses garlic.

Suggest ways that garlic can add flare to old favorites. Garlic mashed potatoes, for example, are a great way to jazz up a dish that may have grown boring.

And at major holidays, suggest adding an ethnic dish. For example, it is an old Italian custom to serve a fish dish, almost always prepared with garlic, at major holidays. Use the trend to ethnic food, healthful eating and variety to tie in garlic.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Garlic should not be misted, and rotation is important since fresh garlic sitting out for long periods will tend to dry out. In addition, the skins of garlic tend to shed with handling so frequent attention to the display to keep it clean and dry will result in better sales.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Garlic should be stored in a cool, well-ventilated place and kept dry.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Garlic is a cross-merchandiser's dream as it is always used in conjunction with other products. Cross-promote in the produce department with salad items since garlic is frequently tossed into salads as an ingredient as well as used in salad dressing. Put garlic next to ripe tomatoes, basil, cilantro, etc., to promote salsa. Suggest a make-your-own-pasta-sauce center with garlic, tomatoes and other ingredients.

Also consider secondary displays of garlic next to meat and poultry to promote as a rub and even next to baguettes in the bakery, promoting roasted garlic as a delicious and healthful alternative to butter.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

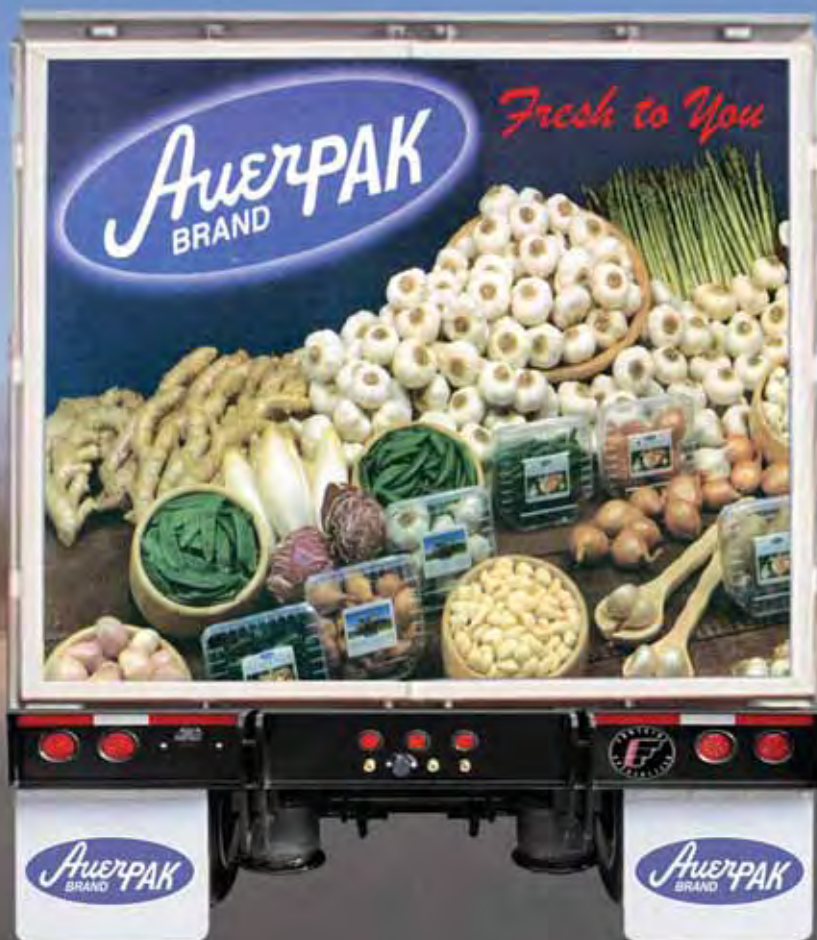
Have a demo with the bakery in which roasted garlic is served with sliced French baguettes. The mild flavor, without the fat of butter, will make it a favorite with many consumers.

Educate your customers about the taste benefits of rubbing the outside of their Easter lamb with cracked garlic prior to roasting.

Provide recipes encouraging holiday chefs to insert whole peeled garlic cloves into slits cut with the point of a sharp knife into their holiday roasts prior to cooking. Watch your garlic (and meat) sales take off!

Do a sauce competition in which consumers make homemade pasta sauce using garlic. Get a local newspaper to judge it and have the winning sauce recipes be part of a "saucy special."

Fast and Fresh!



*At **Maurice A. Auerbach, Inc.**, location is the key to getting produce to you fast and fresh.*

From our South Hackensack location, our network of refrigerated trucks covers the tri-state area. With unsurpassed service to all Northeast area retailers and distribution centers, we provide the highest quality garlic, asparagus, radicchio, sno peas, ginger root, Belgian endive, shallots and many other produce specialties.

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Sunlight International Sales

P.O. Box 1027, Delano, CA 93216

Phone: 661-792-6360 Fax: 661-792-9070

Website: www.dulcich.com Email: nick@dulcich.com



Grapes are available on a year-round basis. Besides adding bright colors, which help drive impulse sales, the bottom line is very impressive. From a seasonal standpoint, grapes can generate \$96 per square foot and are the highest dollars per square foot for the produce department's fruit category for September through December. Moreover, for the same period, grapes ranked as second highest dollars per square foot for the produce department. (Source: *California Table Grape Commission*)

We at Sunlight International Sales are specialists in California Table Grapes. As the marketing arm of Jakov P. Dulcich & Sons LLC, we are growers, packers and shippers of the finest quality and most flavorful grapes in the world.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

California table grapes should be prominently displayed from Memorial Day through Christmas. Two fundamental goals should always be kept in mind when building a display: quality and abundance. An abundant, fresh, high-quality display will generate even greater grape sales. Customers are inclined to buy more grapes from an abundant display. No matter how good the quality of product on display, partially stocked displays will make customers think they are getting lower quality, leftover product other shoppers did not want. To protect their quality while visually providing a picture of abundance, grapes should not be stocked more than one layer high. Fill and maintain the display frequently throughout the day/evening.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Point-of-purchase materials are used to draw customer attention to the display and drive impulse purchase activity. The key to success with point-of-purchase materials is to use the materials to create excitement at the display without taking away from the image of the produce department.

Signage is yet another call to action for customers to buy more grapes. Nutritional and variety information at the display or in the informational directories in the produce department

QUICK TIPS

Carry several colors and varieties — green, red, black, seedless and seeded.

Rotate stock frequently for bright, fresh-looking product.

Promote grapes frequently with expanded displays.

Fruit must be kept at proper temperature to preserve shelf life. Once chilled, keep chilled. The grapes should be kept refrigerated whenever possible.

fulfill customer needs while generating increased sales. With high consumer trust and preference for California-grown grapes, signage highlighting California provides additional sales opportunities.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Variety is the spice of life, and we have plenty of variety. Jakov P. Dulcich and Sons produces 15 different varieties of California Table Grapes, including two new green seedless varieties, Luisco and Autumn King and two new red seedless varieties, Magenta and Scarlet Royal. All four will be in good production in 2009. With today's sophisticated shopper, displaying and promoting a wide range of red, green

and blue-black grapes will generate excitement and sales. Research shows that chains promoting multiple varieties received a minimum of 200 percent item lift over baseline volume. Try displaying an eye-catching mix of product that generates a greater choice of product availability. Variety, display creativity and freshness all stimulate impulse purchase behavior.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Red, white and blue for the Fourth of July; back-to-school with grapes packed in a lunch box for snacks; festive holiday ideas with recipe cards that include grapes for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Marketing studies show front page grape ads generate a 72 percent increase in volume as opposed to back page placement, which generates only a 20 percent increase in volume.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Grapes will not mature or gain sweeter flavor after harvest. We at Sunlight and Dulcich harvest only fruit that has matured to the optimum flavor and sweetness nature provides.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

To maximize sales, straighten grape displays when passing by to work on other displays. When rotating the display, always move older product to the top and center of the display. Whenever low or poor quality product is found, it should be removed. When product on display begins to look tired, remove or rework the product to maintain a fresh quality image and maximize profitability.

Refrigerated displays will extend the shelf life of grapes. Cool temperatures will prevent grapes from drying out.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Never wash grapes in preparation for display. The natural protective layer created by the grapes, called bloom, will be removed, allowing for dehydration or water loss to occur. While water may be refreshing for some produce, it will harm grapes. Always store with other fruits that require cold temperatures. Grapes should be kept at 34° F and high humidity. Never store grapes next to onions or other items that emit strong odors.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

1. Wine, cheese and crackers.
2. Whipped cream and gelatin.





For The Biggest & Best In California Table Grapes,
All Varieties Lead To Dulcich

AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY THROUGH



Jakov P. Dulcich & Sons



For more information contact Nick Dulcich, George Galloway, or Bert Boyd at 661.792.6360 www.Dulcich.com

Website: www.herbthyme.com Email: chick.goodman@comcast.net



HerbThyme Farms provides Herb Center header

HerbThyme offers a full variety of merchandising vehicles including clamshells in .66-, 1-, 2-, 2.5-, 3- and 4-ounce sizes, along with bunches, sleeves,

Cross-merchandising opportunities are endless. Cross-merchandise basil with tomatoes, dill with seafood, rosemary with potatoes, rosemary skewers at the meat counter and Poultry Bouquet with the turkeys or stuffing ingredients. Our 12 varieties of seasonal shippers include recipes designed to move additional produce items.

Promote fresh herbs as a way to “Make Home Cooking Fancy” or as a restaurant alternative. Provide recipe ideas or cross-merchandising displays to help customers understand how to use different fresh herbs.



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FARMS



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America's Coast-to-Coast Herb Supplier



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HOLLANDIA PRODUCE

P.O. Box 1327, Carpinteria, CA 93014

Tel: 805-684-8739 Fax: 805-684-9363

Website: www.livegourmet.com Email: info@livegourmet.com



Since 1996, Live Gourmet brand hydroponically grown living butter lettuce has offered an improved category solution for innovative produce merchandisers across America. With its extended shelf-life and protective, interlocking, and easily merchandisable clamshell package, Live Gourmet butter lettuce has saved hours of labor, significantly reduced shrink and generated higher dollar rings, creating increased gross margins for the butter lettuce category.

Live Gourmet butter lettuce is "Absolutely Fresh because it is still Alive!"

By harvesting our butter lettuce with its roots intact, we provide each delectable leaf with a source of nutrition after harvest, helping the leaf remain fresher and more flavorful for days longer than butter lettuce harvested in the conventional manner. Fresher lettuce means higher flavor profiles and greater nutritional value, which generates higher levels of consumer satisfaction and helps drive increased purchase frequency.

Our lettuce is pest free naturally as we utilize integrated pest management (IPM) regimes – a natural, more ecologically sound pest control method. IPM incorporates naturally occurring pest regulators and beneficial predatory insects that reduce harmful insect populations in the growing environment. No organophosphates or carbamate pesticides are ever used.

The Live Gourmet clamshell packaging concept – we like to call it a mini-greenhouse – provides a micro-environment around the lettuce helping it stay fresher longer. The clamshell protects each delicate leaf from physical damage during handling and acts as a food-safety barrier between the product and the consumer, an area of increased interest for many consumers.

The clamshell's interlocking feature aids in ease of maintaining a presentable, attractive display on your produce section shelf. Just place and replenish the facings daily. Our clamshells are made from post-consumer recyclables and are Level-1 recyclable, a very important feature for most of today's shoppers.

QUICK TIPS

The prime location for our Live Gourmet butter lettuce is directly next to iceberg lettuce in the leafy green section of your produce display.

Place and reface frequently; with the clamshell package, daily trimming and product refreshing will be nominal.

Live Gourmet Advantages:

- Absolutely fresh because it's still alive!
- Consistent uniform product quality all year-round
- Pest free naturally
- Extended shelf-life and reduced shrink that helps you sell more units
- Attractive, see-through and easily merchandisable packaging

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Live Gourmet butter lettuce is truly a value-added offering and can be merchandised successfully in several locations within the produce section of your store. Refrigerated free-standing island displays, end-cap displays and second- and third-level shelving above the wet rack can prove to be excellent merchandising zones, depending upon your store's produce department configuration.

Our research suggests the prime location for our Live Gourmet butter lettuce is directly next to iceberg lettuce in the leafy green section of your produce display. This requires closing of the wet-rack mist system nozzle directly above our product display, thereby eliminating unattractive water spots on the container.

We find that merchandising the product in the bagged salad case is often the area of last resort, and it may lead to buyer confusion. The bagged salad

shopper is looking for tear-and-pour convenience, and our product requires processing before use. In every instance, eye-level multiple facings that create attractive displays help generate increased sales velocity for our product.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Combining offers with other salad ingredients – from croutons to gourmet cheeses and salad dressings – can help acquaint your shoppers with this uniquely fresh butter lettuce.

Promoting your private-label salad dressing in conjunction with our butter lettuce is a great way to generate increased velocity for both categories. Interdepartmental cross-promotional offers, such as a BLT promotion that offers the ingredients for a bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich, can drive traffic to several areas throughout your store.

Use of cents-off coupons for ingredients located at displays of the corresponding items can be used to draw your meat department shopper into your produce section and bakery goods section of the store.

RECEIVING, STORAGE AND HANDLING TIPS

Maintain the cold chain at all times and observe suggested temperature ranges to extend the product's shelf-life.

Inspect all shipping cartons for the enjoy-by-date or best-if-used-by date and maintain proper product rotation in the storage cooler and on the store shelf.

Visually inspect each clamshell during placement on the shelf to insure your display is the very best it can be.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURE

Observe the enjoy-by-date stamped on each package and maintain a proper rotation to insure maximum value for your customer.

Place and reface frequently; with the clamshell package, daily trimming and product refreshing will be nominal.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Be the first in your region to offer a greenhouse-grown section in your produce department. Merchandise greenhouse-grown lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, bell peppers and herbs in one central location.

Stress the benefits of controlled environment growing, uniform quality and reduced pesticide use to generate cross-selling and up-selling of your produce department shoppers.



The *Live Gourmet® Family*

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Judged **Superior in taste, size, texture, weight, freshness, color, and uniformity*

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Absolutely fresh because it's still alive!

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CAL HARVEST MARKETING INC.

8700 Fargo Avenue, Hanford, CA 93230

Tel: 559-582-4000 Fax: 559-582-0683

Website: www.CalHarvest.com Email: Donnaf@CalHarvest.com



RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

More consumers are concerned with the health benefits of the food their families eat. Promoting the impressive nutritional benefits of kiwifruit will encourage first-time consumers to purchase and increase sales to already established consumers.

Displaying kiwifruit as a "SuperFood" that has one of the highest nutrient densities of the major fruits will push sales. Featuring the nutritional value of kiwifruit (vitamin C, folate, potassium, fiber, carotenoids, polyphenols, chlorophyll, glutathione, pectin and vitamin E) compared to its low-calorie content will place kiwifruit at the top of the shopping list. Allowing consumers to choose among bulk, clamshells and bagged kiwifruit is a great way to drive increased sales. One can also increase sales by merchandising ripe or near-ripe kiwifruit and by displaying two sizes of kiwifruit.

Kiwifruit sell best when positioned with mainstream seasonal fruits in a high traffic area. However, caution must be followed when placing kiwifruit next to bananas and apples as the ethylene emitted from these fruit causes kiwifruit to ripen quickly. Likewise, shelf life can be extended when placed next to tree fruit, grapes and citrus.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Kiwifruit are best promoted when consumers see the inside of the fruit. Play up the eye appeal of the inside by cutting a few kiwifruit in half, sealing with plastic wrap and scattering the halves throughout the kiwifruit display.

Signage should promote the health and nutritional benefits of kiwifruit. In addition, make sure

the consumers see placards showing the ease of cutting and scooping the fruit.

Since gold and organic kiwifruit are relatively new to the category, signage drawing attention to these varieties should also be displayed near the fruit.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Kiwifruit is available year-round. Cal-King green and organic kiwifruit is available from October through May, and Chile and New Zealand green, gold and organic kiwifruit are available April through November.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Though kiwifruit have been readily available in North America for many years, there are still some consumers who have never tried one. Efforts should always be made to get consumers to try the fruit and experience its unique taste. Sampling and multiple pricing (three and four for \$1) will encourage trial and purchase with consumers. You can sell more kiwifruit by selling by the pound.

In addition, consumers need constant reminders of the convenience, versatility and nutrition/health benefits of kiwifruit.

Since kiwifruit are a year-round item, there are many opportunities to tie kiwifruit in to holidays by providing recipes and positioning the multiple varieties near fruit dips and seasonal fruit.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Early season kiwifruit should be pre-ripened or "triggered" at shipping point or in the receiver's

ripening room. Kiwifruit are ripe when they yield to gentle pressure. Use pre-ripened or "triggered" kiwifruit for early season sales.

Cal-King conventional and organic kiwifruit have been picked and packed based on California and New Zealand research and recommendations to fully assure consumer acceptance.

Gold kiwifruit arrive ready to eat and require gentle handling. For best results, rotate all kiwifruit often. Storage at 32°F will give optimum storage life. Warmer temperatures will hasten ripening.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

When refilling displays, take care in assuring proper rotation of fruit (place new fruit on bottom). Remove shriveled fruit and maintain a neat and fresh display.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Store firm-to-ripe kiwifruit at 32°F to maintain maximum storage life. Firm kiwifruit can be stored at room temperature to hasten ripening.

Do not mist on display. Spots of dry mold can be wiped off, but discard fruit with wet spots. Unripe kiwifruit are ethylene-sensitive and ripe fruit is an ethylene-producer.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Cross-merchandise with other "SuperFoods" such as apples, blueberries, avocados, oranges or pomegranates. Locate secondary displays of kiwifruit near precut salads and fruit dips.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Nutrition: Kiwifruit is a nutrition powerhouse, packed with phytonutrients that contribute to a healthy heart and help in the fight against cancer.

QUICK TIPS

Feature ripe kiwifruit to encourage purchase.

Build bigger displays in high traffic areas and feature multiple pricing.

Advertise: Sales of kiwifruit increase as much as three times when advertised.

Display kiwifruit with Dr. Steven Pratt's latest book, *SuperFoods Healthstyle*.

Promote specials throughout the year. Kiwifruit is plentiful all year, and is also available in gold and organic.

For more sales market kiwifruit by the pound

A world of kiwifruit profits at your fingertips



"Cal-King", being the oldest continuously used label of kiwifruit, represents one the largest kiwifruit growers in California. This label is marketed by Cal Harvest Marketing, Inc., a family-owned farming and marketing organization that has been at the fore-front of the kiwifruit industry in California since the 1970's. This kiwifruit has been grown, picked and packed with care and pride for over 30 years. And as your customers start asking about food safety and the environment, you can assure them that Cal-King kiwifruit is safe and has one of the lowest carbon footprints of any kiwifruit sold in North America. The label is now available in both conventional and organic styles. Cal Harvest also markets kiwifruit from Chile and New Zealand to assure you have a high quality, year-round source of kiwifruit.

For information contact: Donna Fagundes • donna@calharvest.com • John Fagundes • john@calharvest.com
Phone: 559-582-4000 • Fax: 559-582-0683 • www.CalHarvest.com



WALTER P. RAWL AND SONS, INC.
824 Fairview Rd, Pelion, SC 29123
Tel: 803-894-1900 Fax: 803-894-1945
Website: www.rawl.net



RECOMMENDATION OF DISPLAY ITEMS

The sales of leafy greens can be increased by spotlighting their wonderful nutritional value and utilization ideas. Since today's consumers are more health conscious, the sales potential of greens will be higher particularly if nutritious ideas are displayed along with the greens. Also it is good to point out that greens are available 12 months out of the year for healthy eating.

These can be in the form of recipe cards and/or pictures. Whet consumer's taste buds by displaying tantalizing pictures or colorful recipes cards in close proximity to the greens. Also it is good to display different colored vegetables, making the exhibit very colorful; for example, placing colorful (red and yellow) peppers next to the greens.

Another good idea is to rotate the bunch and loose greens to attract customers. The difference will attract consumers, resulting in higher sales.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Colorful signs depicting the fantastic nutritional value of greens will draw attention to these delicious products. Today's consumers are geared toward getting the healthiest product in the produce section and catchy, colorful signs featuring the great nutritional value of greens would be a great way to get the message across. Coupled with tasty, healthy recipes and beautiful pictures of finished products, these signs would further convey the important message of good nutrition which is a major focus of today's consumer.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Value-added Nature's Greens and Rawl Brand bulk greens are available throughout the year. Originally greens were only available during the fall and winter seasons; however, with the emphasis on healthy eating resulting in a higher demand from consumers, these excellent products are available all twelve months. They are definitely good and good for our health!

ADVERTISING/PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Spotlight leafy greens by featuring both basic

QUICK TIPS

Look for **FRESHNESS** in the bag! These Nature's Greens are fresh, delicious, and easy to prepare. These already cut and tripled washed greens make preparation a snap!

Nature's Greens are very good for the heart since they contain extremely little fat and no cholesterol.

The versatility of Nature's Greens has expanded! Traditionally prepared with water and some type of meat, these highly nutritious vegetables make tasty soups, salads, entrées, pasta dishes, hors d'oeuvres, and dips.

Visit our website at www.rawl.net for some tasty ways to prepare our Nature's Greens.

and unusual ways to use them. Because of their versatility, greens can be used with various other ingredients to create interesting, tasty snack ideas, side dishes, soups, and salads. Consumers' interests will be sparked when featuring tasty ideas on colored recipe cards. (Some recommended colors are bright yellow, lime green, and light purple – when the recipes are printed in black on these cards, they are very easy to read.)

Every month of the year, different utilization ideas can be featured to tie in with health, good taste, and availability. The Southern folklore states that by enjoying greens with black-eyed peas on New Year's Day, one will be prosperous with good luck during the year.

In-store promotions are a very good way to interest consumers since everyone is looking for new recipes. Both the great aroma and the samples featured will result in consumer interest and potential added sales since recipes are a welcomed addition to most kitchens. A win-win situation will be created if the consumer likes the samples and takes a recipe.

Celebrations on a national, regional, and local level are perfect times to promote and market greens. Suggested times are New Year's Day, National Nutrition Month (March), St. Patrick's Day (March 17th), and National Cholesterol Education Month (September). Also a great time to promote greens is during February since this is Heart Month and greens definitely are heart-healthy foods making them perfect for heart-healthy menus.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Greens are very sensitive to moisture loss; therefore, moisture is crucial to bulk greens. Temperatures from 34 degrees to 36 degrees Fahrenheit are the absolute best temperatures for keeping greens. Also, misting is very detrimental on packaged greens; therefore, do not mist packaged greens. Good airflow and the recommended temperatures are very important for increasing shelf life.

Make sure the PLU tags are readable for consumers when culling displays and make sure that stems/leaves showing any off colors such as yellow or brown are trimmed.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

The temperature of 34 degrees Fahrenheit needs to be maintained immediately after receiving greens. Since ethylene gas causes discoloration in greens, close proximity to this gas should be avoided at all times. For restoring greens, a good suggestion is the first in, first out (FIFO) method. Also it is a good idea to check backroom products often for proper rotation.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

An excellent idea to promote leafy greens is to feature them with other items such as red and yellow bell peppers, garlic, and onion for stir frying. Cross-merchandising by promoting good health is an excellent way to promote greens since good health is foremost in all consumers' minds.

Another great idea is to use a mustard green leaf rather than an iceberg lettuce leaf to garnish a vegetable tray or on a grilled meat sandwich.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Serve sautéed greens on yellow stone ground grits or pasta for a tasty idea.

Use greens as one of the vegetables in soups and stews.

Since greens are packed full of good nutrients, encourage children to enjoy them.

Serve collards that have been cooked in chicken broth, then stir fried with garlic, onion, and bell pepper. Sprinkle with a little salt, black pepper, and sugar; toss and serve.



Getting Better All The Time

You have to admit, Mom was right. Greens really ARE good for you. Now there's plenty of science to back her up, and even the American Heart Association has certified our collard greens.



We've listened to the consumers. That's why we redesigned our packaging, and that's why we know your customers will reach for more greens the next time they see our displays. Nature's Greens—a new twist on an old favorite. See for yourself why all the fuss made so much sense.

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BROOKS TROPICALS

18400 SW 256th Street, Homestead, FL 33090

Toll free: 800-327-4833 Fax: 305-246-5827

Website: www.brookstropicals.com • www.brookstropicals.com/chefscorner



INCREASE AVOCADO CATEGORY SALES WITH SLIMCADOS

It's the green-skinned avocado from Southern Florida with less fat and fewer calories.*

The SlimCado's large size complements your current avocado offering, grabbing attention from the value-conscious customer and even the dieter – normally an infrequent visitor in the avocado aisle. Don't forget your Hispanic shopper, who will appreciate having a wider selection of a favorite fruit.

What avocado aficionado wasn't thrilled to hear that avocados contain 'good' fat? Still doctors suggest even 'good' fat be eaten in moderation (70 calories a day). Those 70 calories go much further with SlimCados. SlimCado's distinctive light avocado taste can be added to:

- Green salads – morsels of SlimCados when tossed in make each forkful more delectable.
- Hot soups – cold cubes of these avocados floating on the top push the soup's zest appeal over the top.
- Chunky guacamole – mashed, SlimCados become the party favorite of the buffet table.
- Sandwiches or hamburgers – diced into sandwich spreads or sliced thin to top the feast, these green-skinned avocados make bagged lunches hard to beat.
- SlimCado bowls – cut in half and filled with your favorite seafood salad, SlimCados give a new meaning to dishing it out.
- And finally, there's the simple joy of a Florida avocado cut in half with just a squeeze of lime on top and eaten with a spoon.

So it's official, avocados aren't just for parties. Any meal can be made into a little celebration with SlimCados. Besides being lower in fat and calories, the Florida avocado is also rich in vitamin A, high in potassium and cholesterol free. SlimCados are not genetically modified – they come by these characteristics naturally.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Make a big splash in mid-July to kick off the SlimCado season. Look for promotional volumes of 12-count fruit in July and 10-count in August – just in time for chopping up into salads that make their yearly debut during summer barbecues.

Play up how SlimCados add gusto to the

QUICK TIPS

Make sure customers know the SlimCado stays green as it ripens. To determine ripeness, give it a squeeze and if it gives a little, it's ready to eat.

Keep SlimCados cool but not cold. To ripen, keep them at room temperature. Communicate this to your customers as well.

Retail customers and culinary professionals can find great recipes and tips at Chef's Corner on the Brooks Tropicals Web site.

Download a one page factsheet with more information about merchandising, storing and displaying at www.brookstropical.com/factsheets

guacamole, hamburgers and salads of tailgate parties. The Florida avocado's tropical taste goes well with autumn's typical fare.

And for traditional holiday dinners, SlimCados make a healthy alternative side dish for those special meals.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Display enough to sell in one day, roughly 15 to 30 pieces (depending on the traffic in your store). When replenishing, rotate any leftover day-old fruit to the front. Remember, avocados are sensitive to ethylene.

OPTIMUM SHELF LIFE

Brooks' Continuous Cold Chain® keeps SlimCados at their best from the field to your store. The first link in the chain is the hydro-cooling that is done immediately after harvesting. Hydro-cooling takes the tropical heat out while keeping the fruit's freshness in. The chain continues with these green-skinned avocados being stored in dedicated coolers set at optimum temperature and humidity levels. The final link is the refrigerated loading docks that allow SlimCados to be shipped to your store at optimum freshness.

As the largest grower, packer and shipper of

green-skinned avocados, Brooks Tropicals has a reputation for delivering this fruit with the best in shelf life. SlimCados have approximately a 4-day shelf life with the fruit being ready to eat for another one to two days.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Store SlimCados by keeping their environment cool and humid, between 42° and 48° F. Do not store below 40° F. Optimum humidity is between 85 percent and 95 percent.

SlimCados are UPC/PLU coded and boxed in flats, doubles and bruces.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Add SlimCados to your avocado section and give your customers a choice of great avocado tastes. But don't stop there. Place SlimCados near other salad ingredients. These green-skinned avocados make delicious sense in salads. When the avocados are displayed near bagged salads, your shoppers have a quick and easy way to make their salads special.

When you're rounding up ingredients for your guacamole display, make sure to include SlimCados for a fresh-tasting guacamole.

Merchandise Florida avocados targeting your South and Central American customers. This is the avocado of choice for many Hispanic dishes.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Available July through February, Florida avocados are generally pear shaped and green skinned. Their weight can vary from 14 ounces to a hefty 34 ounces. The avocado will vary in size from four to 12 inches long and up to six inches wide.

**50% less fat and 35% fewer calories than the leading California avocado.*

SlimCado, Continuous Cold Chain and the Brooks Tropicals logo are registered trademarks of Brooks Tropicals, LLC.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Think big displays at the beginning of the season. SlimCado aficionados wait for its arrival. As the season progresses, create small multiple displays to cross-merchandise with bagged salads and guacamole ingredients.

Remember the SlimCado in mid-July; the 12-count is available in promotional volumes. It's a great spark for summer produce sales. In August, ask about promotional volumes for the 10-count.

For a handy pocket care guide for SlimCado® Avocados, e-mail mario@brookstropicals.com.

Healthy salads deserve SlimCado® avocados

With less than half the fat
and a third fewer calories,*
there's no better way to
top a healthy salad.

Florida's SlimCado season
is starting. Call today to get
SlimCados coming your way.



**BROOKS
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GROWER - PACKER - SHIPPER
800.327.4833 Fax 305.246.5827
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*compared to the leading California avocado

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CIRULI BROTHERS

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Mangos, the most consumed fruit in the world, are an important dietary staple across many cultures worldwide. Known for their mouth-watering taste, culinary versatility and nutritional benefits, mangos are an important category because of their increasing sales potential. Consumption of fresh mangos in the U.S. has near doubled in the last ten years, and will continue to augment, partly as a result of changing demographics, and as a result of increased consumer awareness along with collaborative industry promotional efforts.

MERCHANDISING AND DISPLAY IDEAS

To help bolster sales at the retail level, we recommend setting up large, eye-catching displays to showcase the fruit. By the same token, retailers should take time to educate consumers on how to select, handle and consume mangos. This can be achieved through POS material, such as ripening guides and cutting diagrams. Sampling fruit on trays is also an effective way of helping consumers become familiar with the fruit and encourage purchases.

Produce managers can also mix up their displays by merchandising mangos using a wider assortment of varieties, sizes and fruit that is in varying stages of the ripening process. Offering ripe, ready-to-eat fruit plays an important role for customers who don't want to wait for the fruit to mature, and for those who have not tried a mango before and would benefit from an in-store sample. Repeat purchases are more likely to occur if consumers experience a soft, sweet, ripe fruit the first time they try it.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Available year-round, mangos are primarily supplied to the U.S. by Mexico, with increasing imports from Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Guatemala and Haiti. Though there are hundreds of mango varieties in the world, the U.S. primarily markets these varieties:

– **Ataulfo (February – August):** This smaller, kidney-shape variety is a deep golden yellow when ripe, and has an intensely sweet taste. Only the finest Ataulfo is marketed in the U.S. under the Champagne® mango label, which has a velvety texture due to minimal fiber and a small pit.

– **Haden (February – June):** This larger fruit has an oval-round shape and has a firm texture with

QUICK TIPS

Familiarize produce staff with mangos, including their maturity process and handling instructions. They in turn will be better prepared to help answer customers' questions.

POS signage (ripeness charts, cutting diagrams, nutritional content) are useful for encouraging sales and educating consumers about the fruit.

Sampling is one of the most effective ways to encourage impulse purchases. Provide customers with ready-to-eat mango slices or cubes on toothpicks and have a demonstrator show them different ways to cut and eat the fruit.

slightly more fiber. Its skin develops a red blush with some yellow when ripe.

– **Tommy Atkins (March – July):** This variety has a more oblong, oval shape and has a moderately fibrous texture. The skin develops a deep red blush with some green areas.

– **Kent (June – September):** Slightly larger, these mangos have green skin with a slight hint of a red blush. They have a sweet flavor with mild fiber.

– **Keitt (June – October):** This oval-shaped fruit has green skin with a hint of a rosy blush. It has a flavorful aroma and smooth texture.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

There is mango availability in many varieties all year long, creating untapped promotional opportunities for retailers. The fruit can be promoted as a key ingredient during the spring and summer months for use in salsa and guacamole recipes, or as a different take on glaze for barbecuing fish and chicken in the fall. Mangos are also a great addition to frozen drinks, including fruit smoothies for the family, or mango mojitos and daiquiris for when you are entertaining.

By displaying appealing, easy-to-prepare recipes



alongside mango displays, retailers can help persuade customers to purchase the fruit. Mangos are very versatile. They are a scrumptious and wholesome snack eaten alone, and they are a great complement to fresh salads, main entrees, and tasty desserts any time of year. For photos and recipe ideas, please visit www.champagnemango.com.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS:

Mangos are very firm when green, and gradually soften as they become more mature. Allow them to ripen at room temperature to help them achieve optimal maturity and sweetness. To accelerate the process, display them with other ethylene-producing items such as avocados, tomatoes and honeydew melons. Retailers should know that their customers can speed up a mango's ripening process at home by placing the fruit in a sealed paper bag and letting it sit at room temperature until it yields slightly when given a gentle squeeze.

A mango is ripe if it feels soft when you gently press your fingers on it, and if a sweet-smelling scent emanates from the stem-end of the fruit. Unlike bananas, color is not the best indicator of ripeness for mangos because some varieties do not change color and stay green, even when fully mature. Among the varieties more prone to color change are Haden, whose smooth green skin turns a soft yellow with a rosy blush, and Ataulfo, which turns from a lime green to a deep golden yellow when fully mature.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

It is important that produce managers know how to handle mangos on the back end, to prolong shelf life and to uphold the integrity of the fruit. Mangos are best stored at temperatures between 50 – 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Anything lower makes mangos susceptible to chilling injury. Mangos do not require misting, and their typical shelf life is 7 to 14 days on average.

Relative Humidity:	85-90 %
Primary Box Size:	5 Kg
Package Counts:	8-14 ct (Red and Green varieties) 12-20 ct (Ataulfo variety)

OTHER PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Across supermarkets, mangos are frequently promoted in multiples. However, there are many opportunities in promoting mangos using a variety of packaging. Retailers can also promote mangos in boxes. Traditional casing is one way of setting up displays, yet retailers may opt for more innovative packaging options like plastic clamshells or smaller boxes scanned with barcodes at the register. Box promotions are gaining favor because they allow retailers to display more information about the fruit, its handling, and consumption ideas on the packaging itself.



The one and only.

There's only one Champagne® mango. Everything about it is unique: it's incomparable taste, it's smooth texture and rich golden color. From flower to harvest, the Champagne is the most pampered of all mangos. They flourish in the fertile volcanic soil of central Mexico and are caressed by mild south Pacific breezes gently drifting through meticulously cultivated mango groves.

There are no finer mangos available at any price. And you can only get them at Ciruli Brothers.*

* Champagne® is a registered trademark of Ciruli Brothers .

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MONTEREY MUSHROOMS

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RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Research shows that sales can increase up to 40 percent by grouping all varieties together, providing proper space allocation and positioning mushrooms next to the salad section. Demographics play an important role in determining space allocation. Exceptional departments can allocate 32-plus linear feet for mushrooms in the multi-deck case, or 4-8 foot shelves; larger departments should allocate 24 to 28 linear feet; smaller departments with lower income shoppers should allocate 16 linear feet; lastly, stores with small departments and higher income shoppers should allocate 20 to 24 linear feet for mushrooms.

SECONDARY DISPLAYS

Because of the versatility of fresh mushrooms, secondary displays are effective in bringing meal solutions to the mind of the consumer. On-going secondary displays in the salad case and the meat case will generate 12 percent growth in category sales. In addition, seasonal displays can be utilized to feature eggs, potatoes, rice, pasta, tortillas, cheese, onions and other cooking vegetables. Organic, natural, and diet meal solutions are other ideas that are effective with mushrooms.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Attention brought to the category through use of section signage, recipe cards, shelf talkers (on usage, selection, care & handling) will drive sales. Mushroom consumption will grow only if consumers become more educated on usage and benefits, such as mushrooms' contribution to nutrition and weight management. Most stores carry 15 to 25 varieties/package types; so consumer education about what to do with various types of mushrooms is important.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Meal solutions can easily be achieved year-round by cross-promoting sliced mushrooms with bagged salads and capitalizing on grilling opportunities with steaks, stir-frys and shish kabobs on the grill. Steak-Mate thick sliced mushrooms are outstanding displayed in the meat section, as are portabellas during grilling season. Substitution of portabellas as a meat-

QUICK TIPS

Keep mushrooms refrigerated and dry.

Promote mushrooms consistently year-round and particularly throughout the summer. Deep discounts are not necessary. In-store promos help, too.

Utilize multi-item advertising highlighting all category segments.

Merchandise based on department sales and consumer demographics. Use sampling, educational info and recipes to encourage trial, repeat purchase and to drive sales. Definitely add a second display of sliced mushroom packages in the salad section.

less alternative is also very popular. Mushrooms are an ideal item to utilize as a flavor enhancer and complementary ingredient in pastas, soups, eggs, rice, casseroles or pizza.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Maintaining a full variety of white, portabellas, specialty, and dried mushrooms will help drive sales! Practice maximum assortment, which includes a variety of whole, packaged, sliced, portabellas, organics, Baby Pearls and value-added, specialty mushrooms, dried and bulk. Look for new varieties, such as Monterey's new SunBella® Grill-A-Bella, and SunBella® sliced whites and browns that provide Vitamin D benefits for the consumer. Since mushrooms are available throughout the year, it is important that they continue to be well displayed and promoted, especially when you consider the average mushroom dollar ring is over two dollars, and mushrooms generate over \$60 in sales per square foot display space.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Mushrooms are an impulse buy and need promotional activity to help bring new shoppers to the cate-

gory. However, they are not price-sensitive, so deep discounts are not necessary. On average, promotions should be utilized six to eight times per quarter to maximize overall sales. Discounts should generally be between 20 to 33 percent. Two-for-\$X, or multiple pricing, tends to be the most effective method of promoting mushrooms. Research shows that multiple-item ads in the mushroom category generate the most volume and profit for the category.

Feature advertising should be utilized once per quarter to highlight mushrooms. It is important to note that mushrooms sell well during the holidays and that promotions would be more wisely spent during non-holiday weeks. In other words, do not discount mushrooms during the holidays.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATION

Mushrooms are highly susceptible to breakdown and should be refrigerated upon receipt. On average, mushrooms have a shelf life of 6 to 8 days; therefore it is critical that backroom inventory be kept to a minimum. It is important to note that mushrooms gain more flavor as they age, so white mushrooms with a tinge of brown can still be sold as fresh. Brown and specialty varieties usually have an extra day or two in shelf life.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Mushrooms must be displayed and stored between 32 to 36 degrees, 85 to 90 percent humidity. For every five-degree increase in temperature, mushrooms lose a day of shelf life. Due to their high perishability, mushrooms should never be stacked more than two high. Rotate product properly. It is also critical to circulate air ventilation for mushrooms as they are one of produce's most perishable items.

RECEIVING, STORAGE AND HANDLING TIPS

To manage shrink effectively, holding coolers should carry minimal overstock. Avoid out-of-stocks. Plan accordingly for promotions and feature ads. Refrigerate mushrooms immediately. Additionally, store mushrooms up high and off moist floors, away from warm doorways, out of direct airflow and away from odorous perishable items.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Promote and merchandise Monterey's SunBella® Grill-A-Bella mushrooms in the high profile biodegradable tray. Provides 100 percent daily requirement of Vitamin D for consumer health benefits.

Sell bulk Portabellas by the unit versus pound — sales increase up to 300 percent.

Merchandise Monterey's SunBella® Sliced Mushrooms in the new "Resealable Bag" on pegs for maximum visibility near the bagged salad section, to increase your sales and expand your profits.

MORE INNOVATIONS FROM *Monterey*



Monterey continues to innovate with consumer-oriented products. Check our Sun Bella™ White, Baby Bella and Portabella Mushrooms featuring 100% of the recommended daily allowance of Vitamin D—packaged in resealable bags and recyclable containers. Add our new recyclable, biodegradable fiber containers for Whole and Sliced Mushrooms. When it comes to innovation, Monterey leads.

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Reader Service # 27



IDAHO-EASTERN OREGON ONION COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 909, Parma, ID 83660
Tel: 208-722-5111 Fax: 208-722-6582
Website: www.BIGONIONS.com



RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions are versatile onions that may be used at any meal or in any favorite onion recipe. The appeal of Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions is their golden globe shape and their remarkably mild flavor. Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions retain their texture when cooked, adding flavor and consistency to any dish.

When it comes to displaying Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions, we say, "The bigger, the better." The bigger and more dramatic you can make your displays, the better your sales will be.

Good signage that distinguishes the different varieties and versatility of onions will go a long way in increasing sales. Full-color Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion price cards will make the display even stronger.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE /SIGNAGE

Make quick-idea recipes available near the onion section to encourage impulse purchases.

To help consumers decide which onion to purchase, display an Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion sizing chart and poster next to the onions. For example, large-size onions reduce preparation time while their firm flesh makes them ideal for blooms, ringing, slicing and dicing.

QUICK TIPS

Promotional materials and recipe cards should tout Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions as great raw, on burgers and for cooking.

In-store sampling and co-op advertising drive retail sales and product awareness.

Don't forget: "The bigger the better."

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions are available in yellow, red and white varieties. Harvest begins in August with onion availability lasting from August through March.

During the growing season, the Idaho and Eastern Oregon Onion region provides from 35 to 40 percent of the bulb onions consumed in the United States.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Want to increase profits in your produce department? Just feature Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions. Well-tested research shows an average volume gain of 221 percent when Idaho-Eastern Oregon Spanish Onions are featured in retail advertising.

And further, Spanish Onions maintain an average gross profit of 31 percent even when featured at a special price. (Other produce items usually sacrifice one- to two-thirds of their gross profit when featured.) In fact, onions are one of the highest profit margin items in the store.

In-store sampling and co-op advertising drive retail sales and product awareness. The aroma of onion rings sampled in the produce department is

sure to draw a crowd. Contact the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee office to learn about the promotional opportunities for your store.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions are known for their long shelf life. You can increase profitability by reducing shrink if you follow these simple steps:

- Onions should be kept dry and unrefrigerated at retail. Good air circulation is critical for onions.
- Keep product rotated and remove separated and loose skins from the display bin.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

When onions are received, they should be placed one foot away from the wall for proper air circulation. Air circulation is crucial for long-term storage of onions.

Remember not to use plastic pallet wrap on onions in storage, as the plastic wrap limits air movement.

Onions should be kept cool and dry, ideally at 34° to 45° F with about 65 to 70 percent humidity.

Onions should not be stored with other produce that gives off moisture, such as potatoes.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Precut onion blooms filled with a variety of cut produce could be offered in microwavable containers for take-and-bake onion blooms.

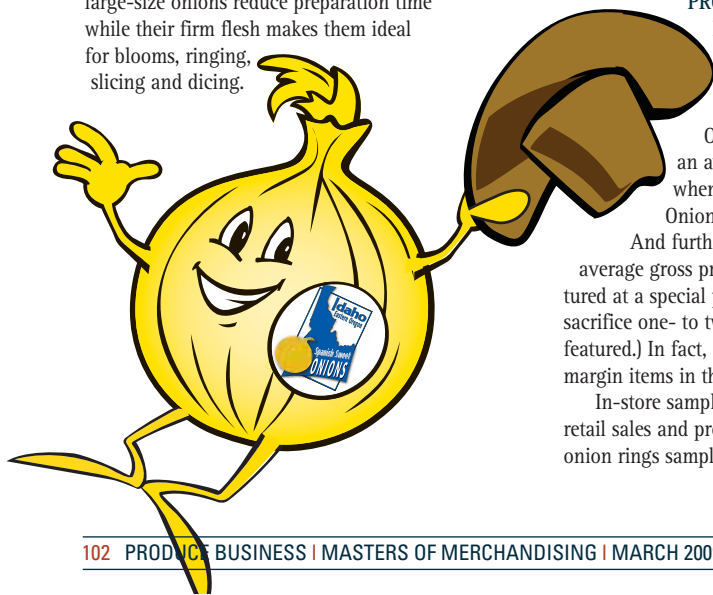
In addition, try cross-merchandising onions in the meat department. Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions are the perfect size for topping hamburgers, and king-size onion rings will just naturally have your customers thinking steak for dinner. For summer, try merchandising onions along with barbeque sauces to suggest a perfect outdoor grilling accompaniment.

Salad tie-ins have proven successful, too.

Display onions right next to other salad ingredients and see how they help sell more of your other produce items.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Onions are one of the most frequently used ingredients in recipes around the world. The onion-shaped cookbook titled *Onions Make the Meal* celebrates the worldwide popularity of onions with more than 100 recipes featuring Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions. Copies of the book are available for \$10, which includes shipping and handling. Try placing samples of the cookbook near the onion display to let your customers know about the many ways to use onions. Contact the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee for more details.





BUY LOCAL... BUY U.S.A

**IDAHO-E. OREGON
SPANISH SWEET ONIONS**

Shippers from the Idaho-E. Oregon Onion Region have been shipping healthy yellow, red and white Spanish Sweet Onions for over 50 years.

When it comes to a consistent supply and the quality you expect, **look for experience!**

WWW.BIGONIONS.COM

**Idaho-E. Oregon Onion Committee
208-722-5111**





COLUMBIA MARKETING INTERNATIONAL (CMI)
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COLUMBIA MARKETING
INTERNATIONAL



RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

The key to a successful organic apple display is to create a true "organic section". This section should be a destination within your department where all of your organic produce items are displayed together. Apples are naturally bright and beautiful and color plays an important role in merchandising as consumers buy with their eyes first and foremost. The most effective way to use color within your organic department is to group all of your apples together using the varieties themselves to make the color breaks. First impressions are everything, so keep displays neat, attractive and full of high-quality apples.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Because organic produce is typically displayed within its own section, it is vital that you have effective signage designating the organic area of your produce department. Ideally there would be a large bright colored banner over the organic section. In addition, the banner would have a brief explanation of organic agriculture. Information and education are crucial to enhancing organic sales.

Organic Point of Sale material (POS) should be easy to distinguish from your conventional POS material with the word "Organic" being very prominent. It's important to supplement your merchandising efforts with attrac-

tive, informative POS materials including, signage, usage charts, and recipes. The more customers understand flavor differences and recommended uses, the more they will buy. CMI carries a variety of organic POS materials that will help educate the customer understand flavor differences and usages.

QUICK TIPS

Show it off! Build organic displays front and center.

Make it Big! Carry several varieties of organic apples.

Shout about it! Use colorful boxes and POS materials to draw attention and help educate consumers about the benefits of eating organic.

Take Care of it! Refrigerate to maintain quality.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

CMI organic apples have excellent availability with domestic organics being available from August through April and imported organics available upon request over the summer months. CMI has developed a 3 X 5 pocket card designed to fit in the pocket of the produce clerk which includes the CMI sweet to tart meter, taste profiles and suggested usages.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

The most effective promotional strategy for your organic section is to regularly advertise that you carry these items and that your store is a destination point for organic produce. Consumers are seeking out organics more than ever before. Promote organics in print and in store by advertising organics as often as possible as features or liner ads as a supplement to conventional apples.

CMI has developed an Organic Farm Stand Bin to help create a Farm Fresh look for consumers. The Farm Stand bin is the size of a two-thirds bin and is a fully contained module that includes everything to assemble the Farm Stand – including 10 cases of fresh organic apples.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Apples ripen 10 times faster at 70 degrees than at 32 degrees, and five times faster at 40 degrees. The ideal storage temperature is 32 to 34 degrees. So if possible, sell apples from a refrigerated display if space permits and keep the air flow moving. If not, don't put out any more than you can rotate and sell

in a timely fashion. The general rule is no more than three days without refrigeration.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Apples are easily bruised, especially the thin-skinned varieties, so be gentle. Whether they are in trays, bags, or loose, proper handling and rotation reduces bruises and blemishes and is the key to high apple profits and customer satisfaction. Throughout the day the display should be culled for freshness and quality. Organic consumers will consistently shop your store for organics if you have removed fruit that has bruises, stem punctures and blemishes. Use bins, baskets and trays that have been designated for organic product only. Consumers should be able to easily identify the organic section and buy with confidence.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Keep organic fruit separated from non-organic fruit. Designate a specific part of the cooler and storage area for organic produce storage and keep your apples in refrigeration at all times. In order to keep apples crisp and juicy, the cold chain should not be broken. Avoid misting apples or using high-temperature lighting and consistently sort, cull and rotate to keep displays fresh. Proper rotation procedures both in the back room and on display are crucial to maintaining the quality and freshness of your organic apple display.

CMI organics are shipped in colorful eye-catching boxes that will help identify the apples as organic. In addition, the apples are stickered with a colorful scannable DataBar sticker that helps the consumer and the checker identify the apple as organic and prevents them from being rung up as conventional fruit at the register.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Organic apples make a perfect promo item with cheese and grapes for cheese trays. Apples are becoming a common ingredient in salsa, green salads, stir fry as well as in smoothies and juice.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Did you know adding apples to your diet can help you lose weight? One apple before each main meal is an effective and healthy way to lose weight by increasing hydration, reducing appetite and increasing fiber.

Hold "apple tastings" or "Flights of Apples" events at which different varieties are sampled like fine wines. Find your favorite apple!





Natural to our core.

CMI has been growing organic produce since the days when we called it simply *natural*. Growing great apples, pears and cherries has always been a way of life for us at CMI. From our innovative growing techniques and environmental land management to our state-of-the-art packing and shipping operations, we've kept our commitment to the best practices and service around. It's all part of CMI's dedication to caring for our land, our families and our customers, *naturally*.

APPLES. PEARS. CHERRIES. ORGANICS.

www.cmiapples.com 509.663.1955 Wenatchee, WA



Available in half, euro and full cartons as well as our new farm stand display.

Reader Service # 40



ALBERT'S ORGANICS

200 Eagle Court, Bridgeport, NJ 08014

Phone: 1-800-899-5944 Fax: 856-241-9676

Website: www.albertsorganics.com Email: sweinstein@albertsorganics.com



A UNFI Company



Recommended Display Ideas

The key to a successful organic vegetable display (as well as an effective organic category display in general) is to create an organic section within your produce department, a place where all of your organic produce items are displayed together. Typically this organic section is a 6-foot or larger upright cooler designated solely for organic produce sales. This section will be most effective when promoted by a large, prominent banner over the display case and declaring your organic section.

In displaying the organic vegetables within your organic section, the key factor is product selection. Rather than attempting to squeeze as many items as possible into a relatively small space, be selective in the vegetable items you choose. What's important is that your shoppers have an opportunity to create a nice organic salad, make a tasty casserole or put together their favorite organic stir-fry. The most popular-selling lettuces, salad greens and cooking vegetables are usually the best choices.

Despite having a limited space for display-making, it's important that your organic vegetable displays reflect the same abundance and creativity that

go into merchandising the other items throughout your department. If you do not have a separate section for your organic vegetables (or organic produce in general), it is important to make sure you comply with the National Organic Standards in your display-making, particularly with regard to "product commingling" (mixing organic and conventional items).



Point-Of-Purchase/Signage

Because your organic produce (and therefore your organic vegetable items) are typically displayed within their own section, it is vital to have effective signage that designates the organic area of your produce department. Ideally there would be a large banner over the organic product case announcing this area as your organic section.

In addition, the banner would have a brief explanation of organic agriculture.

Information and education are crucial to enhancing organic sales.

The organic POS signage should be easy to distinguish from your regular-style POS signs with the word organic being very prominent. The organic signs work best when a different color scheme is used to differentiate them from your regular signage. All products labeled on your signs as "organic" must be certified by a USDA-accredited certifying agency.

Variety And Availability Guide

Organic vegetables are available year-round. During the peak of their season, you can source excellent product from local and regional areas as well as from the primary growing regions.

Promotion/Advertising Ideas

The most effective promotional strategy for organic vegetables is to regularly advertise that you carry these items and that your store is a destination point for organic produce.

September is National Organic Harvest Month, and it is an excellent time to have promotional sales on organic items. An often-used strategy during this time is to discount all organic items for the entire month to a certain percentage, such as 10 percent.

Earth Day in April is also an excellent opportunity for promoting organic produce. Your organic shoppers will look to this day as a time of celebration and feasting.

Display Care And Handling

Think of your organic produce section as a mini produce department, displaying all of your vegetables together and keeping your wet vegetables separate from your vegetables that need no regular hydration.

Backroom Receiving And Preparation Procedures

It is necessary to be in compliance with the National Organic Standards for both prepping and storing organic vegetables.

When prepping organic lettuces and greens, you must have a clean sink (using cleaners approved by the National Organic Standards) as well as fresh water that is used only for prepping organic product.

When storing organic vegetables, it is ideal to have a separate area for storage. Avoid situations where you have iced and hydrated conventional and organic items commingling.

Cross-Merchandising Opportunities

Non-produce items that complement organic vegetables can be very effective when cross-merchandised in your organic section.

Such items as organic salad dressings for salads or organic sauces for vegetable stir-fries can work quite well.

Other Suggestions

Albert's Organics is proud to recommend the Organic Produce College. Founded on over 25 years of successful retail organic produce experience, our program focuses on the unique needs of organic produce operations and merchandising. We offer Produce College as a free service to the natural foods store community, as well as to our mass market customers.

With the organic market growing rapidly, our program focuses on the unique needs of organic produce operations and merchandising. It is our fond wish that this learning will contribute in some way to the profitable growth of organic produce sales and consumption.

Please visit www.albertsorganics.com to learn about Organic Produce College.

QUICK TIPS

Create an organic section within your produce department.

Secure a copy of the USDA's National Organic Standards for reference.

Have a visible organic banner hanging over your organic section.



Grateful Harvest[™]
ORGANIC

Learn how to successfully
retail organic produce.
www.organicproducecollege.com

We want to be your
**Main
Squeeze.**

Pick **Albert's Organics** and reap the benefits of teaming with the leader in **organic distribution**. For more than 25 years, we've been the premier distributor of organic produce and other fine perishable products. Our **Grateful Harvest** line is a **comprehensive organic program**, including merchandising, marketing tools, training and online education to help you best promote your organic produce. So when you choose to stock Albert's Organics, there's so much more to be grateful for.

Questions? Call Todd Greene at
1-800-996-0004 Ext. 26118 or visit
www.albertsorganics.com

Albert's
ORGANICS
A UNFI Company



BROOKS TROPICALS

18400 SW 256th Street, Homestead, FL 33090

Toll free: 800-327-4833 Fax: 305-246-5827

Website: www.brookstropicals.com • www.brookstropicals.com/chefscorner



RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Display papayas as whole fruit as well as cut in half and shrink-wrapped. Use both methods simultaneously for increased sales.

Cutting a ripe papaya lengthwise shows customers that it might have green on the outside but inside the fruit is red, juicy and ready to eat. Demonstrate that the papaya can be eaten by the spoonful or cut up for salads, salsas or smoothies. Increase overall sales by selling it as an edible bowl filled with other fruits, yogurt or salads.

Whole papayas, when displayed with other tropical produce, make for a colorful, unique and interesting display, piquing the curiosity of new consumers. Generate excitement by displaying a large number of papayas – 15 or more pieces of Caribbean Red and 30 of Caribbean Sunrise.

Maximize your papaya sales by selling both. Your customers will appreciate having the choice and may factor in value or convenience when shopping.

Keep an eye on your papaya display. Be quick to sort out any fruit that is less than cosmetically appealing. This fruit is still great tasting, so chop it up to add a tropical taste to prepared fruit salads or blend into fabulous smoothies or as Hispanics call them - batidas.

QUICK TIPS

Caribbean Red and Caribbean Sunrise papayas have an abundance of vitamins and contain papain, an enzyme that aids digestion. For more nutritional information go to www.brookstropicals.com.

Sprinkle fresh lime juice over cut papayas to preserve the fruit's naturally bright flesh.

Retail customers and culinary professionals can find great recipes and tips at Chef's Corner on the Brooks Tropicals Web site.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Brooks Tropicals provides placards and tear-pads for your produce department. The placards provide details on the papayas' origin, taste, color, availability, size and quality, as well as preparation and storage tips and nutritional information.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Brooks Tropicals is the exclusive grower of Caribbean Red and Caribbean Sunrise papayas, which are available year-round.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Brooks Tropicals actively works to increase consumer awareness. We work with food editors, TV producers and celebrity chefs to promote the benefits of including papayas in healthful diets. Our Web site (the URL, brookstropicals.com, is on our label) is a favorite go-to spot for answers on papayas.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Caribbean Red and Caribbean Sunrise papayas are ripe starting at 50 percent color break. If the fruit gives when gently squeezed, it's ready to eat.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Caribbean Red and Caribbean Sunrise papayas can be stored at 42° to 58° F to minimize ripening. Storing them at higher temperatures will speed the ripening process. Storing at 40° or below for prolonged periods may cause injury to the fruit.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Papayas have soft skins, so they are delicate when ripe. Stack up to two or three deep. If using wicker baskets (uneven bottoms and sides), provide a layer of protection between the wicker and the fruit. Do not mist papayas. Keep at room temperature. Caribbean Red papayas have a shelf life of two to five days depending on ripeness; Caribbean Sunrise, three to seven days.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Don't fence these papayas in. Occasionally display outside the tropical produce section by grouping with other popular recipe ingredients, such as salsas or fruit salads. Display a cut-in-half papaya with lime wedges and a plastic spoon in the meals-to-go section.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Salad bars take on tropical flair with chopped papayas ready-to-go. A little signage can tempt first time eaters paving the way to additional whole fruit sales in the produce aisle. Don't stop there, make chopped papayas a part of ready-to-go fruit salads. Salad bars and fruit salads are easy and effective ways to use great tasting papayas that are past their visual prime.

For a salad to go, cut a papaya in half and fill with mixed berries. Overwrap and display for a grab-and-go meal.

Build a salsa ingredients display including the tasty papaya. Show how easily an exotic tropical salad can come together by grouping papayas and other tropical fruits. Suggest using a tropical-flavored yogurt instead of mayonnaise.



The Caribbean
is only a produce
aisle away

Caribbean Red[®] Papayas

Packed and distributed in facilities audited for food safety, Caribbean Red Papayas are kept cool from the field to your store for the maximum in shelf life.

Caribbean Red Papayas are hard to miss, easy to sell, and great to eat.

Call Brooks Tropicals today to get Caribbean Reds coming your way.



**BROOKS
TROPICALS**

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800.327.4833 Fax 305.246.5827
www.brookstropicals.com



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CALIFORNIA PEAR ADVISORY BOARD

1521 "I" Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

Tel: 916-441-0432 Fax: 916-446-1063

Website: www.calpear.com Email: chris@calpear.com



AMERICA'S PEAR SEASON STARTS IN CALIFORNIA

California kick-starts the summer pear season with promotable volumes of Sunspires, Red Pears, Bosc and category-leading Bartletts. Starting in July, fresh, new crop Bartletts drive category performance, contributing 67.4 percent of total category sales! Fresh, new crop Bartletts available in July should be the number one pear on your shelf for the big summer months of July and August. Make the most of this profitable opportunity by following a few simple, proven guidelines:

CONDITION FOR COLOR

Three out of four consumers prefer Bartletts with "more yellow, less green." So make sure your Bartletts receive proper conditioning and handling. Treated pears to "breaking" stage generate an average of 18 percent greater sales than non-treated green Bartletts – the more golden the skin, the more golden your opportunity for optimum sales!

FEATURE WITH THE FLAVORS OF SUMMER

Most consumers consider the Bartlett to be a "summer pear." Capitalize on that connection by displaying Bartletts alongside tree fruits during July and August. Retailers displaying Bartletts next to tree fruit instead of apples enjoyed an 11 percent increase in sales during the summer!

STAY PROFITABLE FROM SUMMER TO FALL!

California pears are available far beyond summer Bartlett season, with varieties like Bosc, Comice, Seckel, Forelle and Red pears. Extend your sales season by letting these varieties ride on the popularity of the Bartlett. Retailers displaying other varieties with their Bartletts keep consumers interested in the pear category and enjoy a 14 percent increase in sales!

Start in California – stay in California – with resources from California Pears!

	Bartlett Availability: July - November
	Sunspire Availability: June - July
	Bosc Availability: August - October
	Comice Availability: August - November
	Forelle Availability: August - October
	Red Pear Availability: July - October
	Seckel Availability: August - October

MOSTLY GREEN Ripen at home at room temperature, and enjoy the ripe, sweet flavor in just a few days! 1	MOSTLY YELLOW Crisp, fragrant and ideal in salads, or for enjoying after a day or two of home ripening! 2	YELLOW Ripe, juicy and ready-to-eat, with a smooth, buttery texture – refrigerate to preserve ripeness! 3
--	---	---



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

America's pear season starts in California, with the #1 pear preferred by consumers: the Bartlett! And since California has the only fresh pears in July, retailers depend on California to kick-start the pear selling season. Keep those sales strong by sticking with California into the Fall, with varieties like Red Pears, Bosc, Comice, Seckel and Forelle. From satisfying your customers to maximizing your sales, California pears really do offer Something for Everyone!



**Contact your shipper today for proven
ideas, tips and strategies to expand the
category and grow your sales!**

California Pear Advisory Board • 1521 "I" Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 441-0432, FAX (916) 446-1063 • www.calpear.com



TURBANA BANANA CORP.

550 Biltmore Way, Suite 730, Coral Gables, FL 33134

Tel: 305-445-1542 Fax: 305-443-8908

Website: www.turbana.com Email: info@turbana.com



RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Fresh whole pineapple should be displayed in a manner that both capitalizes on its strong visual appeal and maximizes consumer impulse purchases. Increasing the size of the pineapple display rarely, if ever, has a detrimental effect on sales of other fruits in the department. This fact further underscores the importance of maintaining a large, well-stocked display of fresh, high quality pineapple. Additionally, cored and peeled pineapple offers the consumer the opportunity to see the flesh of the fruit prior to purchasing and also cuts down preparation time. Effective pineapple merchandising entails offering a good mix of cored and whole product.

PRICING

Pineapple pricing at retail is usually determined by a combination of market conditions and the gross margin objectives of the particular retailer. The majority of fresh whole pineapple is sold on a per unit basis, with typical pricing averaging \$3.99 - \$5.99 per unit. A smaller percentage of fruit is sold by the pound, with the average retail price per pound fluctuating within the \$1.99 - \$2.49 per lb. range.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Valuable consumer information can be transmitted via informative P.O.S. materials. Some important focal points include: (1) nutritional benefits of fresh pineapple, (2) recipe/serving suggestions, (3) relationship of shell-color to taste attributes, i.e., pineapple with relatively higher shell color will not necessarily be sweeter or exhibit the ideal brix, acidity, and translucency mix.

VARIETY

Turbana's pineapple program consists entirely of Fyffes Gold and Pirates of the Caribbean label super sweet pineapples. This variety has gradually taken on an almost generic trade moniker of "MD2" or "golden" pineapple. While the smooth cayenne is still the most widely planted pineapple, other varieties such as Sugarloaf, Pernambuco, Red Spanish, and Queen are also commercially cultivated.

QUICK TIPS

Keep pineapple displays fully stocked and fresh.

Offer both whole and pre-cut pineapple for increased sales.

Use signage emphasizing health/nutrition information and preparation suggestions.

Promote pineapple frequently.

Demo pineapples frequently to stimulate impulse sales.

PROMOTIONAL ADVERTISING IDEAS

The exotic, tropical persona of fresh pineapple provides a limitless amount of advertising and promotional opportunities. Pineapple can be promoted as a stand-alone item emphasizing nutrition and health and fitness, or featured as an ingredient in cakes, pies, cookies, various Polynesian and Asian Dishes, and smoothies. Retailers participating in Turbana's Pirates of the Caribbean program also have access to a full range of Disney oriented promotional themes.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Fyffes Gold and Pirates of the Caribbean label super sweet pineapples are harvested when brix, acidity, and translucency are all exhibiting levels that ensure the consumer the optimum taste experience. Fyffes specifications on these criteria are consistent regardless of the fruit's exterior shell color, so there is never a need to worry about whether your Fyffes pineapple is "ripe" or not.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Prior to retail display, pineapples should be



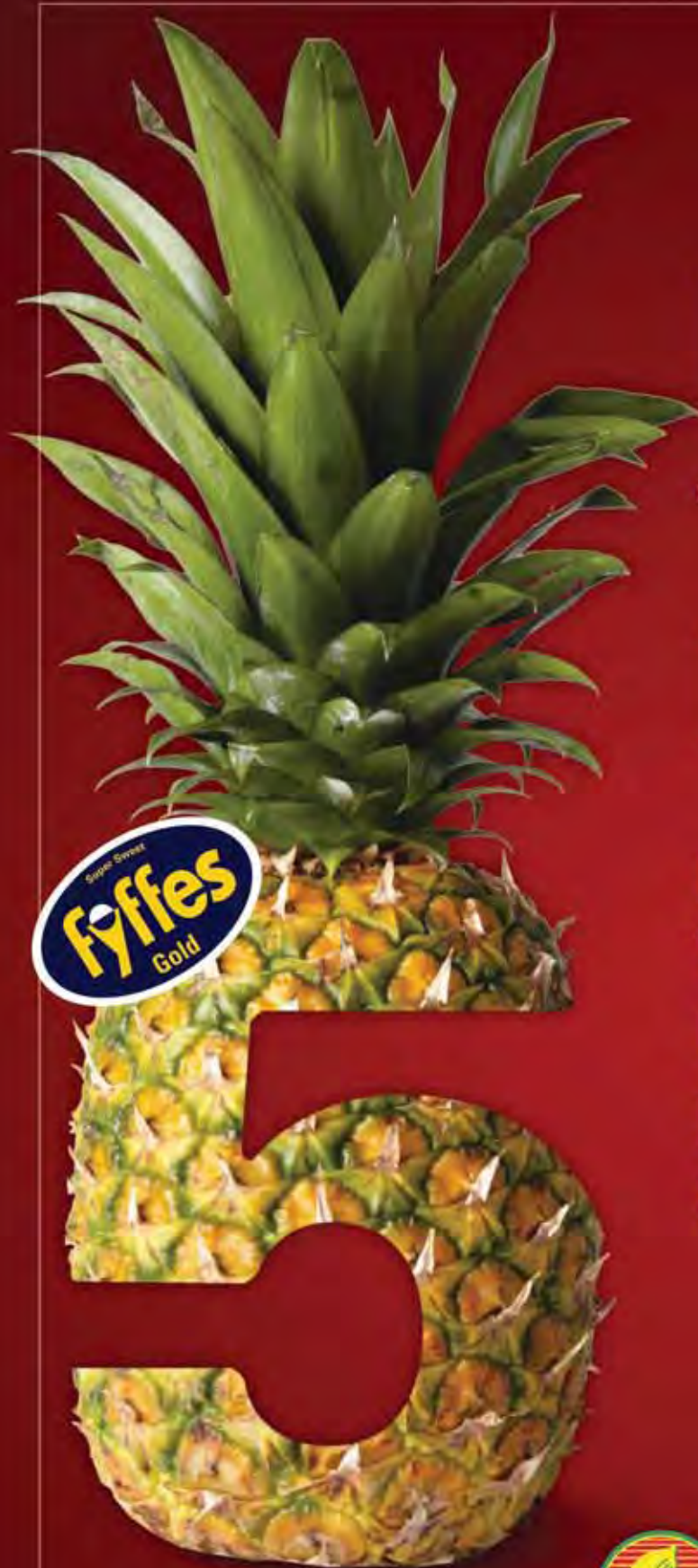
stored at an ambient temperature between 48 and 55° F. Pineapple are quite odor sensitive, so do not store or transport pineapples in a proximity to odor producing items such as peppers and onions. Fresh pineapples make their best visual impact when displayed upright or laid down with crowns facing outward. To minimize bruising, do not display the fruit more than 2 to 3 layers deep.

CROSS MERCHANDISING IDEAS

A great way to attract attention to pineapples is to make them the main attraction in a tropical display featuring items such as coconuts, mangos and papayas. Pineapples and bananas are another excellent tie-in. Cross promotional activities with other Disney Garden items are also available to those retailers participating in a Pirates of the Caribbean pineapple program.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Pineapple has always had somewhat of an exotic persona that evokes images of tropical locales, blue sky and water, and adventure. For those retailers utilizing our Pirates of the Caribbean label, those images offer an excellent platform for contests, sweepstakes and tie-in advertising in their print circulars and/or newspaper ads.



Fyffe Times Better

Fresh & Healthy
Year Round Availability
Fantastic Quality
Flexible Sourcing
Exceptional Service



Reader Service # 45

1-800-TURBANA



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550 Biltmore Way, Suite 730, Coral Gables, FL 33134

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prepared and enjoyed at many stages in the ripening process. This versatility is why most consumers would like to see them offered in both the green and ripened stages. By presenting the consumer plantains in their different stages of ripeness, not only will your shelf life of this product increase dramatically but your sales will also double.

Unlike the banana, plantains are grown with the intention of being cooked in every stage of ripeness, from green to yellow to black. The riper it is, the sweeter the taste. The reason for the change in taste is that the plantain goes through a series of biochemical reactions as it ripens, which is an ongoing process of converting starches to sugars. For example, the green plantain can be enjoyed as a substitute to the potato and may be prepared in the same ways. The riper plantain can be prepared as a sweeter side dish or a delightful dessert.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

To appeal to everyday shoppers, it is important to keep the display full, well maintained and in a visible area of the produce section. This is important for two reasons. First, many shoppers who consume plantains are of ethnic origin, and they look for good quality. If they see a plantain display that is unappealing, they may decide to purchase their plantains at an ethnic or other store. Secondly, mainstream American shoppers may be interested in trying new products for variety if they look appealing. A great display with adequate padding will definitely spark their interest.

Another key element, which can double sales, is to implement a two-color program by displaying both green and ripe plantains together. Many ethnic shoppers eat plantains when they are in the green stage, when the plantain has a starchy quality, and also in the dark stage, when the plantain is much sweeter.

PRICING

It has been proven that plantain sales increase when they are priced at a quantity sold by the dollar instead of by the pound (i.e., 4/\$1). Since plantains are purchased largely by ethnic shoppers, such as Hispanics, many are not completely familiar with a per-pound pricing structure because they use the metric system.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE / SIGNAGE

At the display, it is important to include signage and POS material. Turbana offers our customers leaflets with helpful information, which includes a description of the plantain in its various stages and how to store it. We also offer an array of recipes for mainstream Americans who are interested in sampling them. It is important to educate mainstream Americans on how to prepare the plantain because they have an overwhelmingly positive response once they realize how easy and delicious they are!

Turbana also offers bilingual signage, which includes a description of the plantain and its nutritional content in both English and Spanish. It is

QUICK TIPS

Plantains should always be cooked, never eaten raw.

Keep plantain display full and well maintained.

For increased sales, display both green and ripe plantains.

Price plantains in unit pricing.

Use bilingual signage around display.

advantageous to offer bilingual signage at the display, because many shoppers who eat plantains are Hispanic and seeing their own language in your store will help them to feel welcome and create loyalty among this important growing population.

VARIETY

Turbana Corporation produces the Harton plantain variety exclusively because it provides the best market flexibility. It is the unique variety that can be merchandised in both its green and ripened stages.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Since plantains are in demand among ethnic populations, there may be an untapped potential around stores, depending on the demographics. For stores with high numbers of Hispanic households, advertising in Spanish through local Hispanic media or targeted flyers would have a tremendous impact. Another important way to advertise is through the local Spanish radio stations and cable TV. Turbana can help you with your advertising needs in Spanish.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Different from the banana, the plantain can be

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Store plantains at an ambient temperature between 47° and 50° F, away from freezer and loading dock doors.

Use original cardboard cartons to transport fruit to display area to minimize handling.

Plantains should be displayed on padded shelves to avoid scarring and/or bruising. Display both green and ripened plantains; studies have shown large increases in sales when both green and ripe plantains are available to consumers.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Plantains are most commonly consumed with black beans and rice among Hispanic populations that consume plantains; studies have shown large increases in sales when both green and ripe plantains are available to consumers.

To appeal to mainstream Americans, place honey, whipped cream, chocolate or other fruit with the display to encourage sweet dessert ideas.



**How do you attract
new consumers to
your stores?**

**Answer:
Plantains**

For innovative marketing ideas,
contact Turbana at 1-800 TURBANA





U.S. POTATO BOARD

7555 E. Hampden Ave Ste 492, Denver CO 80231

Tel: 303-873-2312 Fax: 303-369-7718

Website: www.potatogoodness.com Email: carrollg@uspotatoes.com



UNITED STATES

Potato
BOARD



other subcategories

- Include multiple potato items in the same promotion
- Feature multiple potato varieties in the same promotion
- When promoting organic potatoes, include conventional potatoes
- Include the "X FOR" (e.g. 2 for \$5) price in potato promotions
- Vary whether multiple potato items are featured on the same circular page or on different circular pages based on objectives.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Greening has become the most significant quality issue as reported by consumers. In recent consumer intercepts 23 percent of consumers stated they will shy away from the potato table entirely and not purchase potatoes that day if they see green potatoes on the table. Another 70 percent say they will purchase a different variety of potato if their variety of choice has greening bags on the table.

Additional research has shown that standard in-store lighting will green potatoes on the display in one to two days. Ensure you are offering your shopper the best quality possible by following these simple tips:

- Do not wet rack potatoes. Misting potatoes causes them to break down and shrink more quickly than dry potatoes on the table.
- Refrigeration turns potato starches to sugar causing the potato flesh to turn black when cooked.
- Lighting on the wet rack is closer to the product and causes them to green even faster than those on the dry table.
- Turn directional or track lights away from shining directly on the potato table.
- Examine your space-to-sales ratio when any segment of the category is shrinking.
- If you do nothing else, check the bag and bulk displays daily and remove all greening potatoes.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Keeping all fresh potato items together in the produce department is key. However, tests of cross-merchandising a small display of fresh potatoes in the meat department increased the category's net volume by a whopping 35 percent!

QUICK TIPS

Don't succumb to the holiday pressure. Promote potatoes prominently at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter but do not discount more than 20 percent off retail. Even consumers who don't eat them regularly are buying potatoes for their holiday meals. You are leaving money on the table by deep discounting an item consumers will be purchasing anyway.

66 percent of the U.S. consists of one and two-person households. Ensure that you are carrying smaller offerings like 1.5# and 3# bags, clamshells or tray packs that meet the needs of smaller households.

The United States Potato Board (USPB) is committed to creating a consumer-driven potato category that will drive sales and profits throughout the supply chain. The first step is to fully understand the consumer and use that information to create a category that makes it easy for shoppers to say "yes" to potatoes. Next, apply the proven category best practices and watch sales grow.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Consumers are as time-starved as ever. Trips to the store are shorter and more frequent. Consumer research has shown that merchandising all potatoes together, in one location, helps the consumer shop the category.

Consumers say they shop the category by type (variety) and use, (i.e., russets for baking to serve with steaks). By merchandising each variety together on the table, placing bag next to bulk, the shoppers have every offering of that variety in front of them to aid their decision.

Placing the promoted potato item in the front of the department negates the need to visit the potato table; shoppers don't see all the offerings and try something new.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

There is a vital need to communicate the nutritional value of potatoes to consumers, particularly in the aftermath of the low-carb diet craze. If you are serious about creating a consumer-driven potato category, educational point of sale is the silent sales person you can't afford to do without and has proven to increase sales.

A new opportunity exists for the industry to unify efforts and have a significant impact with consumers by rallying around the new "Potatoes...Goodness Unearthed™" campaign. This campaign is based on extensive consumer research to identify the right message that will reach the target consumer in the most effective and meaningful way.

USPB is advertising September 2008 - March 2009 in food lifestyle, women's service, health and parenting type publications. The media plan will generate 90.3 million impressions and reach 45 percent of the target audience, or approximately 35.6 million adults. The first ad made a powerful debut in the September issue of *Southern Living*, proven by a reader survey measuring advertising effectiveness: 21 percent of readers

reported a more favorable opinion of potatoes after seeing the ad and a record 66 percent reported purchasing or planning to purchase potatoes after seeing the ad (13 points higher than the average advertiser for this measurement)!

Leverage this ad buy by reinforcing the ads at the potato table with newly created POP available from the USPB. This creative will STOP consumers in their tracks, HOLD their attention by providing new information about potatoes; specifically it will debunk any negative nutrition myths that may have existed about potatoes and CLOSE the sale with its motivational messaging.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Retail data analysis clearly shows that retailers who carry a broad selection of potatoes in each segment had higher dollars and volume than retailers with partial segmentation. Why? The specialty and premium segments generate incremental volume sales and profit dollars. Offering a high-end potato alternative in demographic-appropriate stores shows your chain is on the leading edge of variety offerings that create consumer interest.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

In 2008, a promotional analysis was conducted on behalf of the USPB (refreshed from the 2006 report) to include 16 national retailers, using the latest 104 weeks of data ending May 31, 2008 for a total of 1,114 promotional events used in the analysis. Promotional performance was evaluated on item and category volume and dollar impact. This analysis identifies optimum discount levels, promotional frequencies, promotion price types, number of items, promotional item mix and packaging mix. To make the analysis more robust and understand the impact of promotions on retailer gross profit, cost data analysis was included using a subset of six of the 16 retailers. A full report is available by contacting the USPB, but key takeaways include:

- Promote 9 to 10 times per quarter
- On average, discount potatoes by less than 25 percent when on promotion
- Include bagged potatoes in each promotion
- Feature multiple potato subcategories in the same promotion; include Mainstream potatoes with



**A boring
category that's past
its prime?**
Guess again.

Peel back the truth!

**Actually, there are several low-cost,
high-impact ways to increase sales
and profits in your potato category.
So a little respect please.**

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POTATOES
GOODNESS
UNEARTHED

For more information on how to increase sales and profits in your potato category,
please contact the United States Potato Board at 303-369-7783.

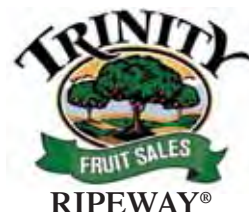


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Website: www.trinityfruit.com Email: sales@trinityfruit.com



QUICK TIPS

Preconditioned fruit will be protected against internal breakdown if the shipper has conditioned fruit for at least 24 to 48 hours with proper humidity (85-95% Relative Humidity).

Monitor storage temperature and fruit pressures daily to maximize fruit quality and minimize loss. Pressures must be taken on fruit that is room temperature and representative of a given shipper's lot specifications.

The aroma of pre-conditioned fruit is great for advertising because the aromatic appeal catches customers' attention.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

The combination of peaches, plums and nectarines displayed side by side with signage that depicts their special ripe characteristics would work very well.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Signage should let the consumer know that this fruit has been pre-ripened naturally in order to give them an outstanding piece of fruit every time.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

In-store tasting demonstrations are the ultimate promotional tool for these commodities. The taste will sell the product since all the ripening work has been done at shipping point. When done in tandem with conventional newspaper ads, look forward to an explosion in sales.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATION

Peaches and nectarines should be displayed at eight to ten pounds, plums at four to six pounds.

RECEIVING, STORAGE AND HANDLING TIPS

1. Upon receiving, take firmness pressures on 10 pieces of fruit per lot. Pressures should be taken on the shoulder, tip and both cheeks, then averaged. Pressures should be taken on fruit that has pulp temperatures in the 68 to 70 degree range.
2. Fruit with pressures at eight to ten pounds average should be stored at 34 to 36 degrees. Higher temperatures will increase rate of ripening.
3. Pressures should be monitored daily to guard against over-ripening.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

- Peaches, plums and nectarines are available from late May through September.
- We can provide a continuous supply of all three commodities throughout the season.



OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Fabulous Tie-In whether it be a garnish, appetizer, salad, dessert or an extraordinary addition to your favorite dish. Think California Pre-Conditioned Fruit.

For conventional or organic, Trinity Fruit will assure that you and your customers are guaranteed a sweet and fresh taste.



**TREE FRUIT
PRE-CONDITIONED PROGRAM AVAILABLE
CONVENTIONAL AND ORGANIC**

**KIWI, TABLE GRAPES, APPLES, POMEGRANATES, PERSIMMONS, CITRUS,
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www.trinityfruit.com



MANN PACKING CO., INC.

P.O. Box 690, Salinas, CA 93902-0690

Tel: 800-884-MANN (6266) Fax: 831-422-5171

Website: www.veggiesmadeeasy.com Email: info@veggiesmadeeasy.com



These steaming items make an ideal break between the packaged salad section and refrigerated dip/dressing section of the value-added produce category.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Utilize point-of-purchase signage to communicate to consumers these items are packaged in cooking vessels – No dishes or mess to clean up!

It is also important to communicate that sometimes a sauce component is included, thus the slightly higher price point. At first glance, the consumer may not recognize these added benefits.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Mann's Steam & Serve items target everyday home cooks who are asking themselves at 4:30, "What's for dinner?" Popular side dish offerings such as vegetable medley with a fresh garden herb sauce are family-friendly with broad appeal. All are available year-round.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

These steam vegetable items are ideal for

"build-a-meal" types of advertising vehicles. Partner them with your store's rotisserie chicken or other ready-to-eat protein products, a packaged salad and a loaf of bread. Dinner is served! Another idea is to incorporate them into any weekly meal planner tools you offer consumers.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Merchandise steam vegetable items in the value added produce case next to packaged salads and refrigerated dips/dressings. Proper temperature control is paramount to the success of these items. Keep constantly refrigerated between 34° and 38° F.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Refrigerate immediately upon receipt. Even a few minutes at room temperature will greatly impact the shelf-life and quality of these items.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Partner with a packaged salad and ready-to-eat, center of plate proteins, so consumers can quickly and easily build a meal.



Winners!



Major trade associations, mass consumer media and leading grocery publications know a winner when they see it. So do your consumers. Stock Mann's complete line of fresh-cut vegetables and get your sales into the victory circle.



Fresh Vegetables Made Easy.™

Salinas, CA | www.veggiesmadeeasy.com | 800-884-6266





FRESHSENSE

150 NewMark Ave., Parlier, CA. 93648
Tel: 866.747.3673 Fax: 559.646.3662
Website: www.FreshSense.net



Custom partnership opportunities with Ripe 'N Ready, Zeal and Treehouse Kids product lines can help you capitalize on the unique demands of today's consumer. FreshSense provides the best pre-conditioned stone fruit available with Ripe 'N Ready, backed by the industry's only "Great Taste Guarantee." Eco-friendly consumers will appreciate knowing that all Zeal fruit is grown under the Protected Harvest program, a certified sustainable growing standard. And health-conscious moms can finally find stone fruit that their children like with the kid-tested Treehouse Kids brand.

FreshSense, backed by its partners, Ballantine Produce Company, Fowler Packing and SunWest Fruit Company, is full of proven resources to train retail staff, build the PPN category and connect to your consumers!

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Arrange the uniquely designed Ripe 'N Ready cartons to amplify your water-fall display. Use Zeal POS to convey the unique story of sustainable farming. And attract active moms concerned about their children's health with a freestanding Treehouse Kids display.

Merchandising Best Practices research commissioned by the California PPN Network has shown that placing complementary fruits near a display of peaches, plums and nectarines results in increased sales. California peaches and nectarines are best displayed adjacent to berries, melons and grapes, while California plums show sales increases through the use of educational POS. Plums are often misunderstood, so teaching

the consumer what to look for when choosing a California plum increases the likelihood of a favorable eating experience. Set up your peach, plum and nectarine displays with complementary fruit and educational POS from FreshSense, and enjoy optimal results. Download your own Consumer Insights and Best Practices brochure from FreshSense.net under the Retailer Resources section.



QUICK TIPS

Sample California peaches, plums and nectarines every week.

Use non-price promotions to boost profits.

Partner with your shippers.

Educate your store level produce staff — your customers will appreciate their knowledge.

POINT OF SALE SIGNAGE

Consumers are always interested in knowing more about the food they are eating, so educate your customers about the peaches, plums and nectarines they are purchasing. Ripe 'N Ready, Zeal and Treehouse Kids each have their own unique program of informative posters, display cards, carton talkers and recipe cards. Selection tips and usage ideas from these POS pieces could increase your stone fruit category volume by 50%.

Your signage program can be enhanced with POS pieces that help the consumer get to know the grower. Gain the trust of "locavores" and eco-savvy consumers by displaying grower profiles available for download at FreshSense.net. Each enables you to share stories, photos, farming history and the unique growing practices from the family of growers represented by FreshSense.



VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

California stone fruit is available from early May through September. There are over 600 different varieties of California peaches, plums and nectarines, each with their own unique flavor and harvest window. Stone fruit growers develop new varieties every year to make sure there are fresh, new flavors ready throughout the season. To find out the when your favorite varieties are available, go to eatcaliforniafruit.com and click on the Retailers section.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Promote Ripe 'N Ready's "Great Taste Guarantee" in your weekly print ads using logos and graphics available at FreshSense.net. Go green by partnering with Zeal and give away eco-friendly reusable grocery bags with qualifying fruit purchases. And

highlight the fun, friendly face of Treehouse Kids by partnering with FreshSense for an in-store sweepstakes that offers qualified customers the chance to win a custom summer treehouse!

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Yellow flesh peaches and nectarines can be enjoyed when soft, juicy and yielding slightly to gentle palm pressure. Some consumers prefer them slightly more firm, when they'll be a bit more tart. White peaches and nectarines are sweet when still firm and crunchy; they can be enjoyed that way or allowed to soften. Both varieties will become sweeter and juicier as they soften.

Red coloring on peaches and nectarines is not an indicator of ripeness — look for uniform overall color with little to no green around the stem.

Plums are best when firm with a little "spring." While plums are generally known for their tart skin and sweet flesh, the skin will become less tart and the flesh sweeter as the plums ripen and soften.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Experience a personalized FreshSense seminar with your staff! Hands-on training with FreshSense will give your staff the tools they need to answer questions from your curious consumers. Or take an online course at CalStatePPN.com to learn about everything having to do with peaches, plums and nectarines, from seedling to storefront. Become an expert in the category from the leaders in the industry, and receive a diploma at the end of your training!



BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

- Don't break the cold chain. Keep stone fruit refrigerated under 38° F. The ideal temperature is between 34° F and 37° F.
- No in and out. Once fruit has left refrigeration for the store, it begins its ripening cycle and should not be placed back in cold storage.
- Rotate properly. The first fruit received should be the first fruit to the shelf.
- Handle with care to avoid unnecessary bruising.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Go local! Capitalize on community summer activities by sponsoring summer fairs, events and other outdoor activities. Bring California peaches, plums and nectarines along for consumers to sample as a refreshing summer snack. Bring flavor to their fun while encouraging a healthy lifestyle!

Innovation that just makes sense.

At **FreshSense**, our innovation shows in many ways including our brands, designed to meet the demands of today's retailers and consumers. **Ripe 'N Ready** delivers pre-conditioned fruit so consistently superior, every bite is backed by the industry's only "Great Taste Guarantee." **Zeal** is the world's only certified sustainable stone fruit and citrus, grown in compliance with Protected Harvest to appeal to eco-conscious consumers. And our **Treehouse Kids** fruit is selected "by kids, for kids" to satisfy children's desire for taste and parents' desire for nutrition. Innovative branding, driven by an insatiable commitment to our quality and your success. Now that makes sense.



To learn more go to www.freshsense.net

FreshSense

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KEYSTONE FRUIT MARKETING

11 N. Carlisle St., Suite 102, Greencastle, PA 17225
Tel: 717-597-2112 Fax: 717-597-4096
Website: www.keystonefruit.com



Onions are the most consumed produce item in the world.
Average annual onion per capita consumption in the United States is 21 pounds.
Flavor Matters...The ability to ensure a consistent sweet onion flavor profile is important. Retailers can now ensure their consumers an enjoyable eating experience every time! That equates to repeat sales and loyal customers.
Since Certified Sweet® onions are available year-round it is easy to see why Sweet Onions are the recognized driver of the onion category.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Sweet Onion usage is very diverse and cross-merchandising opportunities are virtually limitless. Their sweet mild flavors make them fantastic on a hamburger or in a fresh salad – simply slice and enjoy. As an ingredient they are guaranteed to enhance your favorite recipes; sweet onions will take any menu offering to a whole new level!

Emphasize Certified Sweet® onions' great taste and nutritional benefits with salad ingredients for a healthful New Year's "New You" resolution. Great with guacamole and fajita mixes for Super Bowl and Cinco de Mayo promotions. Perfect with steaks, burgers and kabobs – "grillin" promos are always a hit! And don't forget the fresh fruit baskets – sweet onions are terrific with fresh fruit.



AVAILABILITY GUIDE:

GREAT NEWS – Certified Sweet® onions are available 365 days a year. Feature year-round availability to consumers and use regional freshness as an educational vehicle to educate consumers on uniqueness of recognized sweet onion growing districts while maintaining the same great taste they expect. Creating brand awareness translates to consumer loyalty and repeat sales.



Available: Spring and Summer



Available: Summer and Fall



Available: Fall, Winter and Early Spring

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Back to our Roots campaign:

Feature pictures, biographies, history of growers (real people) who produce sweet onions.

Education: Sweet Onion University featuring preparation tips, such as cooking and cutting; educational tips, including storage and handling; and usage ideas, such as recipes and how-to's. Issue certificates of course completion and use in advertising.

Utilize Keystone Kitchen Web site, Vidalia Onion Association, Walla Walla Sweet Onion Committee Web sites, etc...

Schedule a celebrity chef demo at new store openings.

Feature customer testimonials and share real consumer's photos and stories regarding new recipes, first time users or special dinner party/favorite recipes using sweet onions.



In-store demo with Chef Dave



Keystone Vidalia® grower Jim Cowart

"The flavor I count on are the brands you can trust."
- Chef Dave Munson



Certified Sweet®

Flavor you can trust – your sweet onion guarantee!

For more information on our Mayan Sweet Onions, recipes, Chef Dave and the Keystone Kitchen, please visit us at: www.KeystoneChefDave.com

"Certified Sweet" is a registered trademark of National Onion Labs, Inc., Collins, GA.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

GO BIG!!! Capitalize on one of today's hottest trends – fresh produce. It's healthful, colorful and bursting with freshness. Nothing says, "Buy Me," quite like big, prominent bulk and consumer bag displays. End caps, stand-alones, value-added product offerings, multi-size strategies and consumer bagged displays offer consumers multiple buying options and ensure incremental sales lift!

Establish secondary display areas, especially during promotional periods, to increase sales and consumer awareness. Effective point-of-purchase materials and signage also help to showcase the nutritional benefits and outstanding flavor of high-quality sweet onions to consumers. Thirty percent of consumers said they would buy and eat more fruits and vegetables if they knew how to use them – go ahead and help them...

FLAVOR AND NUTRITION DIFFERENTIATION

Product differentiation gives consumers reasons to buy with confidence. Emphasizing the quality, flavor, nutrition and food safety differences of Certified Sweet® onions over regular cooking onions will promote higher rings at the cash register. The top two reasons people eat fruits and vegetables are taste and nutrition. Product education and tasting demos allow consumers to experience products and always generate sales lifts.

PROFITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

Consumers respond to brand recognition. Consistently purchasing the highest quality sweet onions brands from only reputable industry leaders is the easiest way for retailers to provide consumers with confidence that they are buying the highest quality, safest, freshest and most flavorful sweet onions all year long. Forming a win-win relationship between vendors and retailers provides long-term, sustainable and uninterrupted supply.

Keystone
Life should be this sweet.

KEYSTONE FRUIT MARKETING

11 N. Carlisle St., Suite 102, Greencastle, PA 17225

Tel: 717-597-2112 Fax: 717-597-4096

Website: www.keystonefruit.com



THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL
12 Nicklaus Lane, Suite 101, Columbia, SC 29229
Tel/Fax: 803-788-7101
Website: www.sweetpotatousa.org



KEY SELLING STRATEGIES

- Offer two sizes: U.S. #1 for regular customers, Jumbos for value conscious customers
- Offer loose, bagged and individually wrapped
- Offer two colors: For example, Rose and Cream colored
- Stock up for four (4) big Holidays and build large displays: (1) Easter; (2) Mother's Day; (3) Thanksgiving and (4) Christmas/New Years.

SELLING MESSAGES, OR PHRASES, TO USE IN RETAIL ADS

- Bursting with Beta Carotene (antioxidant)
- Cholesterol Free
- Contains Folate
- Fat Free
- Good Source of Fiber
- Great for Grilling
- Healthy, Delicious and Nutritious
- High in Vitamins A and C, and Potassium
- Naturally Sweet
- Rich in complex carbohydrates
- The Versatile Vegetable

CROSS MERCHANDISING

Display with nuts (pecans and walnuts); with various dips and dressings; with spices (cinnamon, curry, garlic, ginger, nutmeg, and rosemary); and with brown sugar, pie shells, marshmallows and maple syrup

IMPORTANCE TO YOUR PRODUCE DEPARTMENT

- Consistent, Year Round Supply
- High Profit Margin
- Increasing Demand and Production (2008 annual production: 1.8 **billion** pounds)
- Increasing Per Capita Usage
- Variety of Skin and Flesh Color

RECEIVING, HANDLING AND DISPLAYING

- Do Not Refrigerate. Sensitive to chilling and freezing
- Do Not Mist
- Store at 55 Degrees Fahrenheit (13 Degrees Centigrade) and 85 % R.H.
- Ethylene Sensitive. Should **not** be stored or transported with commodities that produce ethylene. Typical Shelf Life: 10 to 14 days after packaging (Before packing, sweet potatoes store well under proper conditions for 52 weeks.)



COMMERCIAL VARIETIES SHIPPED

VARIETY	SKIN COLOR	FLESH COLOR
Beauregard	Light Rose to Tan	Dark or Deep Orange
Covington	Rose	Dark Orange
Diane	Burgundy	Deep Orange
Evangeline	Light Rose to Tan	Bright Orange
Golden Sweet	Gold to Tan	Light Yellow
Hatteras	Rose	Dark Orange
Kotobuki (Japanese)	Purple	Cream
O'Henry	White or Cream	Cream

SHIPPING CONTAINERS

40 lb. cartons/RPC's
20 lb. cartons
15 lb. cartons
5 lb. and 3 lb. bags
Individually Shrink Wrapped

...

For recipes, go to the Council's website www.sweetpotatousa.org and its links, as well as the Weight Watchers website: www.tinyURL.com/sweetpotatoes



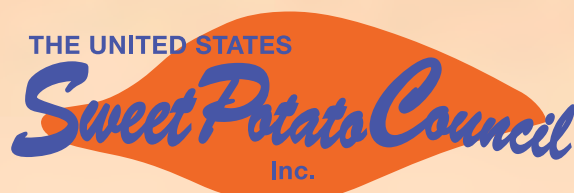
The Sweet Potato: *A Powerhouse of Nutrition* ("Low in calories and sky-high in everything else")

According to Ms. Colleen Doyle, MS, RD and director of nutrition and physical activity at the American Cancer Society, sweet potatoes "just happen to be loaded with cancer-fighting beta carotene, phytochemicals and fiber". Ms. Doyle goes on to say that "sweet potatoes are just **loaded, loaded, loaded** with beta carotene and phytochemicals" (Source: www.cancer.org)

Dr. Janice Bohac, a research geneticist and sweet potato breeder, formerly at USDA's ARS Vegetable Lab in Charleston, SC, says "sweet potatoes contain a high-quality protein, similar to that found in eggs, and are packed with nutrients, including high levels of carotenoids (especially beta carotene), copper, vitamins C and E, and fiber". (Source: www.prevention.com).

In an article entitled "Healing With Dr. Andrew Weil", the headline states that "The Sweet Potato is King: A nearly perfect food that's low in calories and sky-high in everything else". (Source: www.prevention.com) "While nearly all plant foods contain health-promoting phytochemicals" sweet potatoes are listed among the most phyto-dense food sources. (Source: www.askdrsears.com)

For recipes, go to the Council's website (below) and its links,
as well as the Weight Watchers website: www.tinyURL.com/sweetpotatoes



www.SweetPotatoUSA.org

THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL

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Reader Service # 7



MANN PACKING CO., INC.

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Website: www.veggiesmadeeasy.com Email: info@veggiesmadeeasy.com



RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Merchandise vegetable snack packs next to baby carrot products. In larger stores, dual placement by refrigerated dips is successful. Build a snack section or a grab-and-go refrigerated display case near the store entrance or checkout stands for impulse sales. Snack packs sometimes come in smaller bags, so eye-level placement proves most effective.

Fresh-cut vegetable sections make an excellent break between packaged salad displays and refrigerated dressings and dips. Keep displays well stocked with product rotated by best-if-used-by date, first in, first out.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

SKU-specific channel strips and shelf talkers are available to draw attention to the vegetable snack area. These products tend to be in smaller packages, so point-of-sale support material can help draw the shopper's eye and spur trial.

Mann Packing offers a year-round promotion schedule including on-pack coupons and other cross-promotions with leading store brands.

QUICK TIPS

Monitor inventories closely to avoid out-of-stocks.

Keep displays consistent so consumers know where to find their fresh-cut vegetables.

Use point-of-purchase signage to draw attention to the snack pack items.

Promote, promote, promote...leverage Mann's customer support programs to bring new users to the category and keep current customers coming back.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Mann's line of fresh-cut vegetable snacks is available at a stable price on a year-round basis. Also available are larger pack sizes suitable for entertaining bigger groups. Mann also offers Veggies on the Go party platters, "Veggiecatessen" platters with unique dips and snack crackers as well as "Tailgaters" with more savory ingredients like turkey bites and cheese cubes.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Cross-promote fresh-cut vegetables with dips or place in a refrigerated case near the deli counter to capture lunch time sales from the sandwich crowd. Promote during back-to-school events and post Holiday Healthy eating themed programs.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Keep all of Mann's vegetable snack products refrigerated at a constant 34° F. Rotate first in, first out, according to the best-if-used-by date.

All of Mann's fresh-cut vegetables are available year-round.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Shingle the packages on the shelf like tiles on a roof top. Do not stack on top of each other. Keep constantly refrigerated, allowing adequate airflow in

between packages. Avoid excess moisture by keeping the product away from misters. Try to keep SKU placement consistent on the shelf and utilize shelf channel strips so consumers have an easier time finding their favorite products.

Consistency in displays and avoiding out-of-stock situations are key to building sales.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Refrigerate immediately upon receipt. Keep shelf well stocked, but do not overcrowd the display space. It is better to replenish frequently than to present a cluttered display that is harder for the consumer to navigate and for you to keep organized. Store Mann's fresh-cut vegetables away from excess moisture.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Cross-promote with any type of "topper" product – dips, cheese spreads, other produce snack items such as baby carrots, sliced apples or fresh-cut fruit. Build dual displays in high traffic areas to capture grab-and-go sales. Merchandise near the sandwich production area of the deli to capture lunch time sales.



OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Cross-promote during back-to-school! Put a lunch box display case near the vegetable snacks to promote healthful snack ideas for families.

Team with the deli and offer vegetable snacks instead of potato chips as part of lunch time sales.

Standing Ovation



Mann's Healthy Snacks on the Go! now have a stand up feature providing superior merchandising capabilities. This stand up tray, exclusive to Mann, also grows the opportunity for incremental displays in produce and throughout the store.

Consumers can't buy what they can't see—now Mann makes it easier! Depend On Mann.
Because your snacking sales deserve a standing ovation.



Fresh Vegetables Made Easy.™

Salinas, CA | www.veggiesmadeeasy.com | 800-884-6266



NOW SHOWING:

FRUITS & VEGGIES—MORE MATTERS ADDS ONLINE VIDEOS!

Are you curious about how to clean and cook an artichoke at home? Do you know how to choose a melon at its peak of ripeness? Find videos that answer these, and many more, produce questions online at the new Fruits & Veggies—More Matters® Video Center at:

[www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/
video/VideoCenter.php](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/video/VideoCenter.php)

The Video Center's library holds over 300 short informational videos. In these videos, discover how to clean and cook produce and how to check different fruits and vegetables for ripeness. Watch demonstrations of fast and healthy recipe preparation, as produce celebrity Michael Marks, Your Produce Man, takes you step by step through the process of preparing a fresh artichoke, using it to create a delicious dip or an elegant side dish. Learn about proper storage methods for fruits and veggies, plus many other fun and useful tidbits of produce information.



**Fruit & Veggie
How-To Videos**

**Selection.
Storage.
Prep.**



Video Center

Selecting Peaches and Nectarines
Picking the perfect peach is plain peachy. (Say three times, very fast!) Learn how to select peaches and nectarines.
Length: 3:55

Channels

Theme
Budget
Did You Know?
Grilling
Healthy Lunchbox
Holidays/Occasions
Kid-friendly

Videos

Corn Lollipops
Try these corny lollipops for some great low fat snacks such as corn lollipops.
Length: 1:00

Displaying Videos 1 to 8 of 277

**PBH extends its appreciation to the sponsors of this project
for helping the Video Center become a reality!**

www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

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Green Up Cabbage Sales

Smart merchandising, proper pricing and quality packaging can build profits for this leafy favorite.

BY DUANE CRAIG

As economically strapped consumers begin to focus on value, it's critical now more than ever to energize this staple using creative merchandising techniques.

Cabbage has never been an exotic vegetable sought after by foodies and connoisseurs, and some might even say it is primarily a low-volume staple. That reputation stems from its value as a do-everything kind of vegetable that easily cozies up to meat and fish, while lending a hearty flavor to soups and stews. But like a diamond in the rough, cabbage possesses aspects that make it a prime candidate for aggressive merchandising that should begin to pull its numbers up again.

According to a commodity profile produced by the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (AGMRC) at the University of California in Davis, CA, per capita consumption of fresh green cabbage has never rebounded to its 1920s high of 22 pounds. Still, consumption was quite stable for at least the

15-year period leading up to 2005. From 2006 to 2007, the category experienced a sales decline of a little more than 4 percent, reports the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Economic Research Service. It declined again 8 percent from 2007 through the fall of 2008.

According to GMRC, coleslaw and sauerkraut are eaten most often by upper-income consumers while total cabbage consumption is highest among middle-income households. Men consume 25 percent more cabbage than women, and women younger than 20 hardly eat it at all. Two-thirds of all head cabbage sold is consumed at home, which may be a good sign as consumers are eating out less these days.

Those who grow and sell cabbage to the retail sector say they haven't noticed a significant decline in sales, and they continue to view cabbage as a viable and necessary staple that offers opportunities for growth, along with acceptable profits.

DEVELOPING PROFIT

Tim Greene, director of marketing and farming for the Boone, NC-based Hollar & Greene Produce Co., says profitability of cabbage lies in the fact that it is consistently in demand and has a long shelf life. While margins are about the same as others in its category, it has less shrink. But because it is so readily available, retailers need to use caution when pricing so people don't go elsewhere to get it.

Ray Clark, president of the Leafy Greens Council in St. Paul, MN, agrees, describing cabbage margins as steady. While cabbage isn't something to make a killing in, its shelf life adds a lot of value for the retailer.

"Cabbage is one of the best values," adds Jeff Williams, president at William P. Hearne Produce, based in Winauma, FL. "Most of the time, you can get a head of cabbage for \$1, \$1.50 or \$2 tops, and if you take that and add a few potatoes and carrots, you'll have a pretty healthful meal."

Lee Anne Oxford, marketing director for L&M Companies Inc., in Raleigh, NC, sees profit potential of cabbage in its characteristics. She cites its health benefits and many uses as prime promotional factors, but says it takes some effort to convey these things to consumers to ultimately grow sales.



Two-thirds of all head cabbage sold is consumed at home, a good sign as more consumers are eating out less these days.



The cabbage industry lends itself to locally grown promotions.

PUSH RECIPES, LOCAL AND HEALTH

Hollar & Greene's Greene envisions a future of increased cabbage sales by educating the consumer on various ways to use it in cooking. Including recipes either on the wrap or in tear-sheet displays near the product immediately gives the buyer some ideas on uses and preparation techniques.

"It's a low-volume staple and it's hard to expand that business," explains Mike Riner, vegetable farm manager and sales representative at the Elba-NY based CY Farms LLC, "but sales can be helped if you put recipes out there and you help people notice it."

"The older people make cabbage rolls and stuffed cabbage and those recipes just need to be put out there," adds William P. Hearne's Williams. "Educating the consumer will increase sales since many times people just don't know how to prepare it."

According to AGMRC, the cabbage industry, unlike other portions of the U.S. produce industry today, is domestically oriented. As such, it lends itself to locally grown promotion. Hollar & Greene heavily promotes locally grown where it is appropriate.

L&M's Oxford says cabbage is a strengthener of the local connection for consumers. "We supply recipes and we also do a good locally grown program. Cabbage is grown in quite a variety of areas up and down the East Coast and it also grows in a lot of different regions, so it is a good locally grown commodity." From a retailer's perspective, sourcing the locally grown may provide some price advantages, too, she adds.

Riner of CY Farms stresses the importance of communicating cabbage's health

benefits. Including a fact sheet near the display not only provides recipes, but it also notes the anti-cancer characteristics of cabbage, which will help people to understand its value in a healthy lifestyle.

Low consumption by women is one potential opportunity for more sales. The Polish Women's Health Study, as reported in *Oncology Times* in New York, NY, found women who consumed three or more portions of raw or short-cooked cabbage a week during adolescence lowered their cancer risk by 72 percent when compared to women who consumed fewer than one-and-a-half servings a week. The magic bullets in cabbage are called glucosinolates, which are metabolized into derivatives that have anti-cancer characteristics.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY AND YEAR-ROUND

The peak demand for cabbage occurs during the time surrounding St. Patrick's Day, according to AGMRC. December and February are also times of peak demand. While cabbage is harvested year-round in California, other states such as Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin have seasons that extend sometimes six months beyond their typical October harvest due to the use of cold storage.

Near St. Patrick's Day, Hearne Produce supplies cabbage in a high graphics box showing a leprechaun and a pot of gold and when placed on an end cap they help to highlight the product. Retailers can take advantage of other opportunities to promote cabbage beyond St. Patrick's Day. Oxford says promoting cabbage slaw with fish

would work most anytime of the year. Others point to wintertime promotions with recipes featuring stews as additional cabbage sales boosters.

Some retailers are using varieties of cabbage with smaller heads to position the commodity as attractive to small households. L&M sells one of the varieties that produces a smaller head. Oxford says these heads are a 2-person serving and that they have done fairly well in that market.

SMART PACKAGING

Some see wrapping heads of cabbage in cellophane or other similar materials as the solution to several packaging issues. Hollar & Greene's Greene says the first advantage is that it provides a place for the recipe. Beyond that, it helps with sanitation, country-of-origin labeling (COOL) laws, traceability and check-out accuracy.

Additionally, since the supplier typically trims the cabbage head prior to wrapping, that is one less step store employees would have to complete. Greene also says that the recipe opens the door for cross-promoting with other products and for collaborating with suppliers of other recipe ingredients.

One example Greene uses features a processed food, such as salad dressing, in the recipe and having that manufacturer pay for the wrap. He says this might help to address the major resistance to packaging of cabbage, which is cost.

L&M provides wrapped heads, too, that include recipes, adds Oxford.

PRICE THE RIGHT WAY

Pricing cabbage by the head requires some uniformity in head weight, but Hollar & Greene's Greene says if that is present, this pricing strategy works well. Even for chains that use distribution centers, per-head pricing works well as long as the regional variances in head sizes is taken into account when calculating the price.

William P. Hearne's Williams sees cabbage typically being priced by the pound. In some locales, he has seen retailers cut heads in half and wrap them up to be sold by the pound, creating a size that appeals to smaller households. Especially with red cabbage — since it is most often used for garnish or mixed with other greens — smaller sizes, like heads cut into quarters, work well when large quantities aren't needed. Plus, revealing the colorful interior of the red cabbage adds eye appeal to the department. "The average head of (green) cabbage that we are shipping is probably about four pounds," Williams adds. "That seems to be the ideal retail size."

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Top 10 Ways To Boost Berry Sales

Generate excitement, sales and consumer traffic in berry category through effective merchandising and marketing.

BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD

Strawberries, blueberries, blackberries and raspberries have evolved from seasonal profit producers to key contributors to the produce department's annual bottom line. "The berry category is huge for us," reports Jose Manzano, director of produce for Dorothy Lane Markets, a 3-store chain based in Dayton, OH. "In fact, it's our No. 1 category considering all berries together and 52-week availability."

The berry category contributed 6.9 percent to total produce sales in 2008, according to W. Dundee, IL-based Perishables Group FreshFacts data powered by ACNielsen. Since berries have the potential to have a large impact on sales in the produce department, it's important that retailers take advantage of a variety of ways to display, merchandise and promote all varieties of berries on a year-round basis.

1. BUILD BERRY CATEGORY AROUND STRAWBERRIES

Strawberries "are definitely king of the berry category," says Paul Kneeland, vice president of produce and floral for Kings Super Markets Inc., a 25-store chain based in Parsippany, NJ.

Strawberries contributed 3.9 percent to total produce sales for the 52-week period ending Oct. 31, 2008, according to FreshFacts data.

In spite of other berries gaining shares, "Strawberries still dominate the category and continue to grow sales," reports Vincent Lopes, vice president of Dole Berry Co. LLC, based in Monterey, CA. "It's a very healthy category that is still increasing."

California produces the lion's share of



Most leading retailers promote strawberries more than 40 weeks per year.

domestic strawberries. "State acreage is up 3.8 percent over 2008," states Chris Christian, vice president of trade and nutrition for the Watsonville, CA-based California Strawberry Commission (CSC). "This, in part, is due to increased demand over the past 10 years. There's also now a long, steady period of supply from late March into August that has allowed for more consistent promotions at retail. We also continue to see increased availability of strawberries into September and October due to secondary or summer plantings."

The Florida strawberry crop begins harvest in November and runs through early April, providing the wintertime counterpart to California's supply. "The state produces about 22 million flats on 8,300 acres," notes Ted Campbell, executive director of the Florida Strawberry Growers Association

(FSGA), in Plant City, FL. "This acreage has remained stable, however, there's been an increase in productivity over the years." Retailers tend to automatically switch their sourcing of strawberries from Florida to California come the beginning of April.

According to Gary Wishnatzki, president and CEO of Plant City, FL-based Wishnatzki Farms, "We still have good quality and volumes into the first two weeks of April."

The bulk of strawberries sold in the United States are domestically grown. Mexico is the leading exporter to the United States, shipping in the winter months, especially to West Coast markets. Chile is the second largest source of U.S. strawberry imports, but perishability has limited this with imports at only 5,000 cases for the 2007/08 season compared to 15,000 cases in 2006/07.

Tom Tjerandsen, spokesman for the



A destination berry patch is an important trend in the produce department.

Chilean Fresh Fruit Association (CFFA), located in Stockton, CA, notes, "Strawberries are a larger berry. They tend to jostle more in the container than do bushberries, which creates quality issues."

2. BOOST TOTAL BERRY SALES

Strawberries may be king of the berry category, but, "Bushberries are increasing dramatically faster than strawberries," reports Brian Bocock, vice president of sales for Naturipe Farms LLC, in Salinas, CA.

The point to remember is that "strawberries begin with an almost universal user base, so the increased consumption in strawberries is based on increased availability and on consumers eating strawberries more frequently," adds Gloria Chillon, director of marketing for Driscoll Strawberry Associates Inc., headquartered in Watsonville, CA. "Blueberries are on a rapid growth curve in terms of both user base and frequency of usage, and raspberries and blackberries have even more room to grow in terms of user base and consumption."

Doug Perkins, director of sales at Hurst's Berry Farm, based in Sheridan, OR, says, "Blueberries, blackberries and raspberries are now mainstream in just about all produce departments. Times of the year in which blackberries and raspberries are limited in production still exist. However, stronger varieties are closing that gap, giving retailers more confidence to promote all three on a more regular basis."

Blueberries are second in sales to strawberries at Kings, Kneeland says. "They're on the increase because of better available quality. Plus, they have a taste profile different from strawberries that leads consumers to pick up both berries."

The real opportunity with blueberries is in incremental sales, notes Naturipe's Bocock. "Most categories grow around 2 to 3 percent, but the potential with blueberries is upwards of 10 to 15 percent."

Blueberries contributed 1.7 percent to total produce sales for the 52-week period ending Oct. 31, 2008, according to FreshFacts data. This percentage is poised to rise as fresh-market production skyrockets.

Production of fresh market blueberries in North America was 227 million pounds in 2008 compared to 171 million pounds in 2007, reports the Folsom, CA-based North American Blueberry Council (NABC).

"Blueberry production for the fresh market continues to increase in response to continued consumer interest in the healthfulness of blueberries," adds Mark Villata, NABC executive director.

On the import side, blueberry exports to the United States from Chile were 14.5 million cases in 2007/08 compared to only 11 million cases in 2006/07, according to data supplied by the CFFA.

"Imported winter fresh blueberries have helped the category grow by making blueberries a year-round fruit," explains NABC's Villata. "Volume from South America is increasing as new plantings start to mature

"Our research shows consumer knowledge of the nutritional content of berries has contributed to the increase of consumption."

**— Patty Boman
Giumarra/
VBM International Berry**

and bear fruit."

Family Tree Farms, based in Reedley, CA, is one grower that is entering the blueberry market in a big way. "Our mission is flavor," states Don Goforth, director of marketing. "To this end, we've obtained exclusive North American rights to grow and market several varieties of blueberries from Australia developed by a breeder with a mutual passion for flavor. These have intense flavor."

"Our current blueberry varieties include Star, O'Neils, Spring High and a very early variety called Snow Chaser that actually bloomed in November and was severely hurt during a hard freeze late in the year," Goforth continues. "The company's current production is centered in the Kettleman Hills area of California, which produces fruit two to three weeks earlier than fruit from the San Joaquin Valley. We expect our main production to begin in late March and continue into June. This gives us the advantage of going to market with one of the first domestic blueberries of the season at a time where imports are wrapping up and starting to look tired."

The early domestic blueberry deal is gaining ground in Florida as well, where the berries harvest from early April to mid-May. "Florida is a relatively small player in blueberry production, but acreage is increasing and production will grow in the next several years," says Wishnatzki Farm's Wishnatzki.

Raspberries are the No. 3 selling berries at Kings, Kneeland reports. "The quality of raspberries has much improved, especially in the domestic market and less so in the imports. Customers are looking for size, a deep red color and flavor."

Jim Grabowski, merchandising manager for Well-Pict Berries Inc., located in Watsonville, CA, says, "We've seen a remarkable

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increase in demand for raspberries and I think this has to do with newer varieties that taste better."

Raspberries contributed 0.8 percent to total produce sales for the 52-week period ending Oct. 31, 2008, according to FreshFacts data.

Flavor is also propelling blackberry sales at retail, notes Kneeland. "There's been a huge improvement in blackberries. Because of this, they've become more mainstream rather than just sit in the corner."

Jerry D'Amore, director of new business for the Winter Haven, FL-based Sunnyridge Farms Inc., agrees, adding, "There's been a lot of good genetic work and cultural practices done on blackberries to improve their eating experience and it's paying off. Flavor is better now and so is their shipability."

According to data provided by FreshFacts, blackberries contributed 0.4 percent of total produce sales for the 52-week period ending Oct. 31, 2008.

3. STOCK A VARIETY OF BERRIES

When it comes to berries, size offers an incremental sales opportunity. "I think today's consumer has more of a focus on flavorful berries," reports Cindy Jewell, director of marketing at Oxnard, CA-based California Giant Inc. "Consumers want to purchase berries that taste like berries. Size is secondary in priority."

"Don't forget to include stem berries in the product mix," Jewell continues. "Since stem berries are also sold in clamshells, shrink on this item has been significantly reduced compared to the days when they were sold bulk on an 'each' basis. However, shrink on this item can be higher than standard berries, so they should be refrigerated or have fewer quantities on display since turns on this item may not be as rapid."

Driscoll's Chillon adds, "For stores with the right demographic mix, long-stem strawberries present another venue to increase the dollar value of consumer purchases through the berry patch display."

Some consumers still consider stem berries as a luxury or special occasion berry. "Promote during holidays such as Valentine's Day, Easter and Mother's Day," suggests D'Amore.

However, "If featured with melting chocolate for dipping, suggestive selling like this makes any time a special occasion and supports additional impulse purchases," states Jewell.

As for bigger blueberries, Hurst's Perkins says, "There are times of the year, such as May, July and December, where the fruit is quite large or jumbo in size. This is an

Hook Berry Sales During Holidays

Holidays, such as Valentine's Day and Mother's Day, provide retailers with the perfect opportunity to boost berry sales. "I think there is great opportunity to promote at graduation and the beginning of summer with fruit trays, fruit and dip displays, as well as fun barbecue and entertaining recipes that bring this unique presentation into play," explains Michelle Deleissegues, marketing director for Red Blossom Sales Inc., headquartered in Oxnard, CA. "Christmas and New Year's are also great times to present berries as a special holiday treat. Berries are great with cocktails, cheeses, desserts and champagne toasts."

Tim Wetherbee, sales manager at Ham-

mon, NJ-based Diamond Blueberry Inc., agrees. "Close to 50 percent of the New Jersey blueberry crop moves over the Fourth of July holiday. This is a big promotional time for us."

It's important "to promote pre-holiday, holiday and in the post-holiday weeks to maximize sales," stresses Chris Christian, vice president of trade and nutrition for the California Strawberry Commission (CSC), located in Watsonville, CA.

Don't forget to plan orders in advance, reminds Stephanie Hilton, director of marketing at Beach Street Farms, based in Watsonville, CA. "Order aggressively when berries are on ad, because sales can more than triple."

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opportunity to promote something different with an item that is available on a year-round basis."

4. OFFER ORGANICS

Strawberries are the top-selling variety of organic berries at Kings. "Raspberries are second due to availability, third is blueberries and then blackberries," says Kneeland.

The same ranking in sales exists at Dorothy Lane Markets. "Growers are doing a good job at increasing the amount of organic blueberries," states Manzano. "We can carry them almost year-round."

"One-third of our blueberries out of Chile this season are organic and we're the largest blueberry shipper in Chile," reports Naturipe Farm's Bocock.

According to research conducted during the first quarter of 2008 by Encore Associates Inc., in San Ramon, CA, on behalf of the CFFA, best performing retailers who stocked a 1-pound clamshell of organic strawberries and a 4.4-ounce clamshell of organic blueberries, but did not necessarily promote these products, saw a 250 percent sales increase over retailers who did not carry the products at all or carried them sporadically during this time. The price of organic blueberries per unit averaged \$3 more than their conventional counterparts.

Organic berries rose 35 percent in dollar sales and 19 percent in pounds during the 52-week period ending Oct. 28, 2008, according to FreshLook Marketing data provided by Giumarra/VBM International Berry LLC, a Los Angeles, CA-based joint venture of The Giumarra Companies and Vital Berry Marketing.

California Giant's Jewell points to talk about the poor economy having a potential negative effect on consumer purchases of organics. "This may be the case with the consumer who occasionally purchases organic berries and other produce items," she explains. "However, some consumers have a very strong commitment to buying organic items on a regular basis."

5. CHILL OUT

Maintenance of the cold chain is the key to berry quality. "Fresh berries are one of the few items in the entire supermarket that can make a broad statement about that store's overall commitment to quality," notes Driscoll's Chillon.

During transport, "Maintain 32°F," advises Dole's Lopes. "Many carriers and dispatchers worry berries will freeze at 32°F and therefore they err higher, which, according to post-harvest studies, actually increases respiration, reduces shelf life and makes the berries more prone to bruising in transit. We actually use discharge air in some of our precoolers as low as 29.5°F and strawberries typically need to be held below 29°F for an extended period of time before freeze damage can occur."

"To maximize cold chain management, retailers should immediately move berries once they're received into refrigerated storage," explains Chillon. "If the berries are covered during transit, remove the plastic immediately. Keep them dry and away from all water and moisture sources."

Hurst's Perkins recommends displaying berries on refrigerated tables. "Maintaining a cooler temperature on berries is important

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for not only the shelf life while in the store but also for the shelf life in the consumer's home and ultimately repeat sales."

If berries are displayed on unrefrigerated display tables, "they need extra care and reworking since they will break down faster," states California Giant's Jewell. "Research shows that one hour out of refrigeration can reduce shelf life by one full day. The best merchandising practice when displaying berries on un-refrigerated tables is to price them accordingly to ensure rapid sales and limited time on display."

Consumers can now comment directly to the grower/shipper on the quality of their berries. In December, Wishnatzki Farms instituted its FreshQC traceback system that can accurately trace a clamshell of strawberries all the way from the consumer back to the individual who picked those strawberries in the field. "We are using this system every day for quality control," notes Wishnatzki. "It gives us the ability to relate feedback from consumers and retailers to a particular grower, field and picker with pinpoint accuracy. This provides everyone added incentive and the ability to stay focused on quality."

Driscoll's is also introducing a system that allows people to trace an individual clamshell from the consumer back to the field where it was grown via an on-pack, 12-digit identification code.

6. OFFER LARGER PACKAGE SIZES

Today's consumers "are looking for value," points out Kings' Kneeland. "They see bigger pack sizes, they do the math, and they find the price connection. We promote 2-pound clamshells of strawberries and 18-ounce clamshells of blueberries when they're available."

Stocking larger pack sizes "is a trend that could mean more movement for both growers and retailers," states Michelle Deleissegues, marketing director for Red Blossom Sales Inc., in Oxnard, CA. The 4-pound unit for strawberries continues to have increased sales and the 18-ounce size blueberry has been very popular this winter."

Hurst's Perkins agrees, adding, "Stronger quality fruit is allowing bigger pack styles to be introduced. This includes a 12-ounce packs of raspberries and blackberries."

The 1-pound clamshell of strawberries is the workhorse of the berry category. "The 1-pound clamshell represents 67 percent of dollar sales at retail, the 2-pound represents 16 percent and the 4-pound represents 7 percent," says CSA's Christian. "Interestingly, three years ago, the 1-pounder represented 90 percent of dollar sales."

"We recommend that the 1-pound package should occupy 60 percent of the display space and the 2-pound and 4-pound packages should each occupy 20 percent of the display space from March through August," Christian continues. "This display space should be expanded during peak availability and holiday promotional periods."

As for bushberries, "Most retailers look for the 4.4-ounce clamshell at the start of the season to achieve a certain price point," adds Sunnyside's D'Amore. "Once volume increases, the trend now is to go with a 6-ounce pack as the standard."

7. ALLOCATE ENOUGH DISPLAY SPACE

Dorothy Lane Markets displays all berries together, says Manzano.

The unique aspect of the berry category is that it doesn't cannibalize itself, states Naturipe's Bocock. "Retailers who build sizable displays see an exponential lift in sales from all berries. Display contests among produce managers add that much more excitement and sales increase to the category as a whole."

Driscoll's Chillon agrees, adding, "Retail marketing of a destination berry patch display as a permanent part of the produce department is an important trend. In a very high percentage of supermarkets throughout the United States and Canada, consumers can find a large display of fresh berries in the same location practically year-round. This gives the retailer the flexibility to expand or contract the share of the display dedicated to each type of berry depending on what has the greatest availability or is on promotion. At the same time, they continue to merchandise other berries — often with higher margins — as part of the same display. This leads to add-on sales and increased movement of all of the berries all year long."

Rotation is the key to keeping displays looking fresh, notes Stephanie Hilton, director of marketing at Beach Street Farms, based in Watsonville, CA. "Also, keep displays well stocked, especially during peak shopping hours of 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm."

Hurst's Perkins recommends building secondary displays throughout the store, saying, "Put them up front. Put them in the deli area. Put them in the prepared foods area. Berries have proven to provide high-profit margins."

8. CROSS MERCHANDISE AND CONDUCT DEMOS

Pairing berries with other ingredients offers meal solutions and sales opportunities. "Display berries with complementary

"The best merchandising practice when displaying berries on un-refrigerated tables is to price them accordingly to ensure rapid sales and limited time on display."

**— Cindy Jewell
California Giant Inc.**

food items such as whipped cream and angel food cake," suggests Stan Crafton, general manager at Giumarra/VBM International Berry.

Get creative with cross-merchandising, too, adds Red Blossom's Deleissegues. "Pair berries with spinach, melons, smoothie ingredients, non-alcoholic and alcoholic drink ingredients, salsas and salads."

Some retailers have found success with cross-merchandising berries in the cereal aisle, according to Sunnyside's D'Amore. "This is more complicated than bananas because you must have a rolling, refrigerated unit to maintain the best berry quality."

Chilean blueberry growers' voluntary contribution of an additional \$100,000 per season in the 2007/08 and 2008/09 seasons to promote blueberries has sparked innovative recipe ideas for cold weather cross-merchandising for this fruit.

Ruth Lowenberg, senior vice president of the New York, NY-based Lewis & Neale Inc., and spokeswoman for the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council, located in Folsom, CA, explains, "With the winter availability of fresh blueberries, we've worked with chefs on wintertime usage ideas such as hot cobblers, sauces and chutneys. There's a trend now for fruit-flavored cocktails and blueberries fit right in with this trend."

Winter recipes and usage ideas for blueberries have been communicated to consumers through print-media campaigns, radio and TV placements on PBS's *Chefs A' Field: Kids on the Farm* and *Mr. Food*, and a Sky Radio interview on American Airlines and Northwest Airlines.

9. SELL HEALTH BENEFITS

Berries "are low in calories and fat, but high in antioxidants, vitamins and fiber,"

"We'll promote blueberries, raspberries and blackberries at three for \$10 at the height of the season to encourage consumers to mix and match."

**— Paul Kneeland
Kings Super Markets Inc.**

reports says Driscoll's Chillon. "They taste great, too."

"The media does an excellent job of informing consumers about the nutritional attributes of berries," states Patty Boman, director of category management for Giumarra/VBM International Berry.

"Retailers can capitalize on this by adding nutritional signage and other POS," Boman continues. "Our research shows consumer knowledge of the nutritional content of berries has significantly contributed to the increase of consumption."

The latest research regarding the relationship berries have with a variety of health benefits is the focus of the 2009 International Berry Health Benefits Symposium to be held in June in Monterrey, CA. The National Berry Crops Initiative — a partnership of industry, academia and government — will host the conference.

10. ADVERTISE AND PROMOTE YEAR-ROUND

Dorothy Lane Markets actively promotes berries year-round. "Frequent promotions is what makes this the No. 1 category for us," says Manzano.

At Kings Super Markets, "We'll promote blueberries, raspberries and blackberries at three for \$10 at the height of the season to encourage consumers to mix and match," notes Kneeland. "This spurs volume movement and incremental sales."

According to Driscoll's Chillon, "It wasn't that long ago when berries were regarded as a loss leader, but that has changed dramatically. Consumers have indicated that they

are willing to pay a price for berries of all types. In fact, our research shows that in the summer, fresh berries generate a per-square-foot profit that outpaces almost everything in the produce department."

Just because the price goes up on berries toward the latter part of the year, "It doesn't mean retailers can't promote and sell lots of strawberries with well-managed berry promotional displays," remarks Doug Ranno, chief operating officer and managing partner of Colorful Harvest LLC, in Salinas, CA.

Dole's Lopes agrees, adding, "Most retailers that are leading this category promote

strawberries in excess of 40 weeks per year in some combination of front page, back page, line item and/or in-store promotion. This really is a promotion-driven item."

Consider assortment-type ads featuring mix and match bush-berry types all at the same price, states California Giant's Jewell. "Be sure to include POS material and nutritional information for the consumer to help influence purchase."

Giumarra's Crafton recommends running ads for buy-one-get-one on 1-pound clamshells of strawberries. "They're extremely effective."

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Five Ways To Sell More Carrots

Boost sales by offering bountiful displays with plenty of variety and value-added carrots.

BY CAROL BAREUTHER, RD

Consumers dig carrots. Despite tough economic times, sales of this staple root vegetable remain strong, contributing 2.6 percent to total produce sales in 2008, according to W. Dundee, IL-based Perishables Group FreshFacts data powered by The Nielsen Co.

"Carrots are a year-round consistent seller for us," states Jose Manzano, produce director for Dorothy Lane Markets, a 3-store chain based in Dayton, OH. "We carry them all — cellos, babies, organics, lunch sizes and value-added." Yet, some cost conscious shoppers are opting for a less expensive, and therefore less convenient form of carrot. This is changing the category's landscape and driving retailers to ditch old merchandising strategies and plant a few new ones.

1. CELLOS & BABIES REMAIN BEST SELLERS

Baby carrots remain the No. 1 seller at Kings Super Markets Inc., a 25-store chain based in Parsippany, NJ. "The 2-pound baby is second, followed by the 1- and 2-pound cellos," reports Paul Kneeland, vice president of produce and floral.

Baby carrots represented 56 percent of total U.S. carrot category dollar sales for the 52-week period ending Oct. 26, 2008, according to Information Resources Inc. (IRI) data, as supplied by Bakersfield, CA-based Grimmway Farms. This represented a 1 percent decrease compared to the same time period last year.

Harry Sheaffer, sales manager at Marker 29 Produce Inc., in Lake Park, GA, says, "Baby carrots flourish because there are so many forms and uses, including being a favorite in lunchboxes."

Meanwhile, fresh carrots represented



Consumers will continue to buy carrots regardless of the economy, but perhaps in a different form.

20.5 percent of total U.S. carrot category dollar sales, according to IRI data, a 7 percent increase from the prior year. Doug Willis, sales manager, at Arvin, CA-based Kern Ridge Growers, says, "It seems like we're selling more of the cellos these days, more 1-pounders and more of the 2-pounders, too. There's been a bit of a drop off in baby carrot sales."

This is indeed a trend, agrees Bill Wolfert, general manager of Wolfert's Family Farm, headquartered in Bradford, Ontario, Canada. "While baby carrots and cellos are best-sellers, we're seeing a swing back to more cellos due to the declining economy. We'll see this trend for the next three to five years. Consumers will buy carrots regardless of the economy. They're a staple. We've sold

no less volume over the last 12 to 24 months, but we have sold them in a different form."

On this theme, Sheaffer adds, "I think the switch to cellos is going along with a swing back to more cooking at home. Consumers are getting back into the kitchen and they're more willing to do some peeling, chopping and cooking. For example, they're picking up a bag of carrots, a stalk of celery and a bottle of ranch dressing and making their own party trays. They're also picking up a bag of carrots for their soups and stews, rather than quickly throwing baby carrots into the pot."

As a result, some retailers are starting to carry more 3-pound and 5-pound cello bagged carrots. "We're not going to see a real

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decline in baby carrot sales as a result," Sheaffer states. "I think we'll just see a slowing of their sales growth."

2. GAIN INCREMENTAL SALES WITH VALUE-ADDED

The two biggest growth areas in the carrot category today are value-added and organic," notes Phil Gruzka, vice president of marketing at Grimmway Farms. "For example, our 1-pound, microwavable, petite carrot is a big seller. It's up significantly in double-digit sales, and this has occurred for the past few years. It's about convenience."

Kings' Kneeland, who hasn't seen a huge resurgence in cellos, says, "Value-added carrots — the coins, shreds and petites, for example — have really helped to grow category sales."

Value-added carrots represented 10 percent of total U.S. carrot category dollar sales for the 52-week period ending Oct. 26, 2008, according to IRI data. This represents a 1 percent increase compared to the same time period a year ago.

"We've seen a drop off in sales in coins and matchsticks," reports Wolfert of Wolfert's Farm. "I think it's due to the price point. Consumers want to save those extra cents these days."

"Consumers are getting back into the kitchen and they're more willing to do some peeling, chopping and cooking."

**— Harry Sheaffer
Marker 29 Produce Inc.**

3. CONSIDER STOCKING COLORFUL CARROTS

Think carrot and a neon-orange color springs to mind. "We've carried the yellow and maroon carrots intermittently, but they haven't done all that well," says Dorothy Lane's Manzano. "They don't fit customers' image of a traditional carrot."

On the other hand, Kings' Kneeland reports, "It's the novelty, the uniqueness, that entices consumers to pick these up. We carry the yellow organic, rainbow carrots and maroon baby carrots on the bunch and they've done well."

Are colorful carrots catching on? Yes and no, says Jeff Brechler, sales and production manager for J & D Produce Inc., an Edinburg, TX-based grower of maroon carrots. "Some retailers are behind it and position it as another variety, or for its superior nutritional benefits. Others just see it as another SKU taking up shelf space."

The answer is definitely "yes," according to Doug Ranno, chief operating officer and managing partner at Salinas, CA-based Colorful Harvest LLC. "When I first started growing and packing these colorful carrots, most of the other larger carrot companies told me that it would not work and that I was wasting my time. However, we've seen a very steady growth each year, and I see others trying to get into colored carrots now. This alone should be an indicator that more and more consumers want colorful carrots."

"Why wouldn't consumers want to try a rainbow of different colored carrots?" Ranno continues. "Especially when they provide such a diversity of nutrient benefits and great, sweet, crunchy taste? They are a perfect way to help moms get kids interested in healthful eating."

Suppliers of colorful carrots have introduced a number of products, including value-added. For example, Colorful Harvest offers its traditionally bred rainbow carrots, which come in shades of red, orange, tangerine, yellow, white and cream, in poly bags of whole carrots, baby whole-peeled carrots, carrot shreds and carrot sticks.

In 2008, J & D Produce introduced its Beta Bites, which are carrot coins sold in an 8-ounce package, notes Brechler. "The maroon color on our carrots is only 1/8- to 1/4-inch deep. The inner core is orange. Therefore, peeled baby carrots are not something we can make with this carrot without losing its identity. But, we are looking at a snack-pack size of the maroon carrot coins."

Also in 2008, Grimmway Farms added two new value-added carrot products under its Cal Organic Farms label: organic, yellow baby carrots in a 1-pound bag and shredded, yellow carrots in a 10-ounce bag.

4. CREATE A COMPELLING DISPLAY

Maximizing dollar sales and moving volume in the carrot category "depends on where you merchandise them," states Kings Super Markets' Kneeland. "For example, we keep the cellos all together over by the cooking vegetables. The shreds are displayed next to the bagged salads. The baby, peeled carrots serve as color breaks on the wet rack so there's not just a sea of green. These are the best sellers; then again, maybe they're the best sellers because we put them in

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The largest sales of carrots occur between Thanksgiving and Super Bowl.

more than one location."

"The category for us has grown into an average 4-foot wide section," reports Manzano of Dorothy Lane. "That's what it takes to display all the variety consumers are looking for today."

As a consumer, "I like to see all carrot products in one place in the department," adds Marker 29's Sheaffer.

Wolfert Farms' Wolfert agrees, adding, "Lining up the carrot products side-by-side allows consumers to see the entire line of what's available, see the price points and make their choices."

Colorful carrots "should be displayed right next to traditional carrots and promoted to tell consumers about their benefits," suggests Colorful Harvest's Ranno.

But don't let the smaller SKU of colorful carrots "get lost on the shelf," advises J & D Produce's Brechler. "Prevent this by placing them within the display and giving them proper signage."

Fresh-cuts should ideally be merchandised "alongside the same commodities sold in bulk," recommends Candice Blackmoore, director of marketing at Apio Inc., based in Guadalupe, CA. "For bagged carrots, that would be near the bulk carrots. For carrots

in party trays, we recommend having a separate set under the bagged vegetables or at the bottom of the salad case."

As a novelty, "Buy a 50-pound bag of carrots and put them out in a loose display," suggests Marker 29's Sheaffer. "It gives a farm-stand look and feel and consumers might like picking their own carrots much as they do ears of corn."

Timesaving continues to be a big draw to many consumers, and this impacts which SKUs of carrots to carry, explains Blackmoore. "The economy has driven consumers to look for value first, which often means bulk or larger pack sizes. However, single servings and smaller packaging are still popular with consumers looking to trade time for convenience."

"Cross-promote carrots with dips and dressings, for example, for making a salad or slaw or for snacking," adds Blackmoore. "This offers easy options and is a valuable resource for shoppers."

5. PROMOTE YEAR-ROUND

One-pound packages of baby carrots in conventional and organic varieties are promoted regularly at Dorothy Lane Markets "because they are the most popular with

consumers," reports Manzano.

At Kings Super Markets, much of the carrot category goes on promotion at strategic times during the year. "We just ran an ad where we grouped several carrot products together in our signature column," says Kneeland. "This included items like the bunched maroon carrots as well as regular baby carrots. Best-sellers combined with the less familiar gets customers to try something new."

"Maximizing dollar sales and moving volume in the carrot category depends on where you merchandise them."

**— Paul Kneeland
Kings Super Markets Inc.**

There are no significant peaks and valleys in supplies or sales of carrots throughout the year, according to Grimmway's Gruzka. "However, the largest sales take place from Thanksgiving to Super Bowl. It's all the parties, plus cooking cold-weather dishes like soups and stews. Carrot sales are lowest during the hottest months of June, July and August. A successful way to promote carrots is to offer 1- or 2-pound bags of baby carrots for a deep reduction, say 50¢ off, then offer a lower level promotion on ancillary items at the same time, for example, 10¢ off carrot shreds."

Promote other "hard goods" in the same ad, adds Marker 29's Schaeffer. "Potatoes and onions, for example, have the same long shelf life as do whole carrots. This can be a value to consumers — the fact that these items don't go bad easily. Inform customers of this and tie-in a recipe."

Demos are a successful way to promote colorful carrots, says J & D Produce's Brechler. "We've had a huge success with demos. The problem is that sales don't stay up afterwards until you keep promoting the carrots regularly."

When advertising organic carrots, "The price doesn't need to be as low and the discount as deep as for conventional," Gruzka notes. "Don't always put the pack or product on ad week in and week out. Vary the sizes. It's a good way to trade consumers up to larger size packs."

pb

Organic Carrots 101

Organic carrots are among the Top 5 selling SKUs at Parsippany, NJ-based Kings Super Markets Inc., notes Paul Kneeland, vice president of produce and floral.

According to Information Resources, Inc. (IRI), in Chicago, IL, organics represented 13.5 percent of total U.S. carrot category dollar sales for the 52-week period ending Oct. 26, 2008. This represents a 9 percent gain compared to the same time

frame a year ago.

The demand for organic carrots "is coming from consumers who don't want to eat synthetic pesticides in their foods," explains Phil Gruzka, vice president of marketing at Grimmway Farms, headquartered in Bakersfield, CA.

Yet, "Like other value-added carrots, we see organics down due to the higher price point," adds Doug Willis, sales manager at Kern Ridge Growers, in Arvin, CA. **pb**

Merchandise

Avocados With Ease

Creative marketing and regionalized consumer education can significantly boost avocado sales.

BY JON VANZILE

Lee Reynolds, director of produce for the Bellingham, WA-based Haggen Inc. chain of supermarkets, knows he can count on avocados for consistently strong sales and good margins. The fruit is easy to promote, turns over quickly and yields a healthy margin. In order to take advantage of avocados' high profit margin, Haggen offers the popular product year-round.

Once considered a seasonal exotic fruit with a strong ethnic following, avocados are poised to become a national staple, thanks to improved handling and packing techniques, and the introduction of Mexican avocados to the entire U.S. market. Until recently, Mexican avocados were prohibited in certain states. Due to a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) rule change in 2007, Mexican avocados are now available 365 days a year anywhere in the country. Today, Mexico is the largest supplier of avocados in the country. When combined with the California and Chilean crops, this means any retailer in America can permanently stock ripe, ready-to-eat avocados.

The avocado industry has worked diligently to translate increased availability into increased demand. The Hass Avocado Board (HAB), which has representatives from each of the major avocado growing countries, has developed a highly effective communication strategy to increase avocado sales.

At the retail level, packers have made it possible to offer ripe fruit through innovative ripening programs that can consistently deliver ripe, ready-to-eat fruit on demand.

Taken together, the increased availability, visibility and quality of avocados means any retailer can launch a successful avocado program. The key is knowing product velocity, displaying the fruit using proven strate-



The most effective avocado displays are placed near other ingredients used to make guacamole, such as tomatoes.

gies and aggressively promoting avocados whenever possible — not just on Cinco de Mayo and Super Bowl weekend.

Retailers that follow these steps are likely to be rewarded. According to Jan DeLyser, vice president of marketing for the Irvine, CA-based California Avocado Commission (CAC), annual avocado consumption is 3.2 pounds per person in the United States, up about 15 percent from 10 years ago.

"Avocados are one of our Top 10 commodities on an individual basis," Reynolds says. "It's one of those items consumers pick up on an impulse."

STOCK MANY VARIETIES

Although there are several varieties of avocados, the Hass avocado — a semi-arid fruit that grows readily in California and Central America, as well as parts of South America — dominates the U.S. avocado industry. Hass avocados represent at least 95 percent of the avocado market. In some areas, they may be the only type of avocado for sale.

The Hass avocado possesses many qualities that make it perfect for retailing. It is an excellent tasting fruit with a high fat content that blends well into guacamole and other

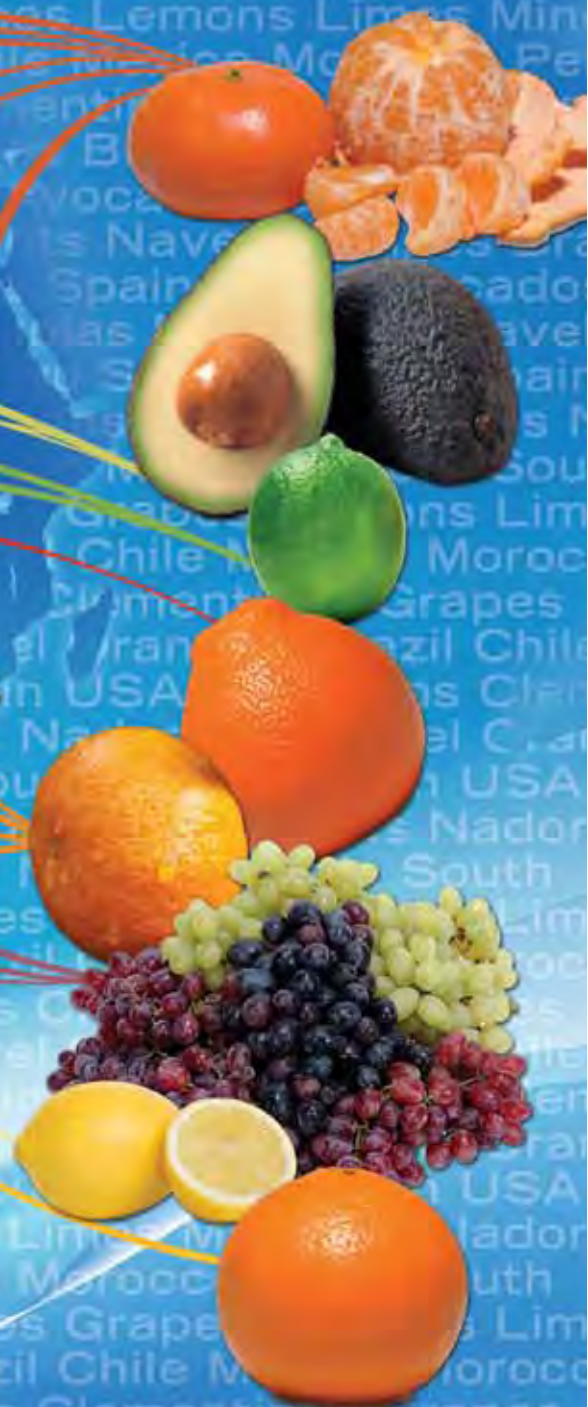


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avocado dips. Unlike green avocados, the Hass avocado also changes colors as it ripens, with the pebbled skin morphing into a darker greenish-brown. This helps consumers choose the perfect fruit. Additionally, it stands up well to shipping and handling, providing the cold chain is maintained from packer to retailer.

"The Hass avocado has the best flavor, a long season and an easily merchandised size range," asserts Rob Wedin, vice president of

The size of the display, and even the ripeness of the fruit, depends on the details of the market itself.

sales and fresh marketing for Calavo Growers Inc., in Santa Paula, CA.

But Hass avocados aren't the only fruit available. Along the East Coast, consumers have traditionally purchased Florida avocados. These tropical avocados are typically much larger than Hass avocados with a smooth bright green skin. They contain less fat and calories, making them perfect choices for health-conscious consumers who like to serve sliced avocados either as a stand-alone items or in salads. Although they are a seasonal product, Florida avocados are available throughout the United States.

Avocados are available processed into guacamole and other dips. In the past, processed guacamole dips relied on oils and other fats to achieve a consistent texture and shelf life. Today, however, new, high-pressure processing techniques make it possible to produce a processed guacamole that is almost pure avocado and includes tomatoes, onions and spices. These dips must be stored in cool cases and are typically offered in either the produce section or the deli alongside other prepared dips.

"Processed guacamole has improved enormously," says Wedin. "It used to be a frozen product. With the new, ultra high-pressured system that pasteurizes it, you can add fresh tomato, onion and garlic and maintain a shelf life of 40 days."

BUILD DISPLAYS TO MATCH DEMOGRAPHICS

Avocado growers and trade groups have



Florida avocados are typically larger than Hass avocados and they contain less fat and calories.

Photo courtesy of Brooks Tropicals LLC

studied the best way to successfully sell avocados. The most effective displays feature a variety of sizes of ripe fruit, ideally placed near complementary vegetables and herbs. Avocados should be displayed near onions, tomato, lime and cilantro — basically, the ingredients used to make guacamole.

The size of the display, and even the ripeness of the fruit, depends on the details of the market itself. It's important to only display the number of avocados that will sell, as they are not very forgiving when it comes to ripeness, and shrink can rapidly eat into margins if too many avocados are lost on the display.

The United States can be loosely divided into several regions based on avocado preference. The Pacific crescent, which runs from Washington down to California and then east to Texas, is the largest market for avocados. In this region, so-called "super users" buy up to 150 avocados annually, or three per week. These consumers are experienced avocado buyers. They buy bagged fruit in large quantities and they know how to ripen hard fruit at home.

The second largest market runs along the East Coast, from Florida up into the Northeast. In this market, consumers may have been exposed to avocado as a health food or through innovative menu items at restaurants. These areas also have large Hispanic populations that eagerly seek out the fruit. However, there is still plenty of room for growth and consumer education.

The Midwest and Great Plains are considered developing markets, where avoca-

dos are sometimes unfamiliar fruit to consumers. In some cases, avocados weren't available here on a year-round basis until 2007, when the USDA allowed national distribution of Mexican Hass avocados. Consumers in these areas are less likely to know the various ways avocados can be used or to know how to store, ripen and cut the fruit.

"There is still growth to come in the Midwest market and Northern United States," says Bill Tarleton, director of marketing and communications for Mission Produce Inc. in Oxnard, CA. "They know what guacamole is, but they don't eat avocados on sandwiches in place of mayo, or in salads or make avocado soup."

Within these larger regions, smaller market trends are important. Florida, for instance, has distinct differences between North Florida, where fewer avocados are sold, and the Hispanic cities in South Florida, where tropical avocados are staple fruits.

"If a retailer is in a market where a consumer is a heavy-to-medium user, the key is to increase visibility," explains Emiliano Escobedo, marketing director for Avocado Producers and Exporting Packers Association of Michoacán, (APEAM) based in Uruapan, Michoacán, Mexico. APEAM is a nonprofit organization that represents 4,500 growers and 29 packers in Mexico's main avocado growing state. "You can increase visibility with an end cap or an island display with contrasting colors, like those of tomatoes or onions. Displaying them with complementary products, such as tomatoes, will increase sales of both."



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By contrast, in the medium- or light-use areas, consumer education plays an integral role. Promotions can include guacamole recipes, as well as tips for using, storing and ripening avocados.

Demonstrations are also an effective way to introduce avocados to consumers. Store employees can demonstrate how to cut, pit, peel and slice the fruit, and then serve fresh, ripe fruit to shoppers. Guacamole can also be made on-site and offered with a bag of tortilla chips, which will increase sales of both items.

Offering a variety of avocado sizes is also a good idea. The standard Hass avocado for single-sale is the 48, meaning there are 48

"If you have a mixed display of all three sizes, you've got it covered. The bigger fruit is usually in shortest supply, so the price is higher while the display is smaller."

**— Rob Wedin
Calavo Growers Inc.**

avocados in every 25-pound box. Each fruit weighs about half a pound. Both larger and smaller varieties also exist. Smaller fruit is often packaged four to five avocados per bag, especially in high-consumption areas where they are a regular part of the diet. Bagged fruit represents about 15 percent of the avocado market, says Avi Crane, president and CEO of Prime Produce International LLC, in Orange, CA.

"If you have a mixed display of all three sizes, you've got it covered," Wedin states. "The bigger fruit is usually in shortest supply, so the price is higher while the display is smaller."

Haggen's Reynolds stocks mostly 32s and 60s instead of the standard 48s. "If you carry just the 48s, it's harder to carry two sizes," he advises. "My customers like the big avocados, so I make sure to get them even when they're scarce." He's also hoping to steer consumers toward the larger avocados by permanently stocking 32s. "You make

Hass Avocado Board's Marketing Efforts

Hass avocados in the United States come from California, Mexico or Chile. The industry is represented by the Irvine, CA-based Hass Avocado Board (HAB), which recently formed a marketing committee to help regional groups coordinate their promotional efforts. "The thinking behind the HAB is one of communication between the different groups that allows for more organized planning," says Jan DeLyser, vice president of marketing for the California Avocado Commission (CAC) located in Irvine, CA. "The marketing boards work together to fund promotions."

The regional organizations, including the CAC, the Mexican Hass Importers Association (MHAIA) and the Chilean Avocado Importers Association (CAIA), each contribute funds to the HAB, which then redistributes the money and helps organize promotions.

"The HAB has done a great job," says

Ed Figueroa, a category manager of avocados, for L.G.S. Specialty Sales Ltd. in New York, who also serves as a director at MHAIA and HAB. "The 2008 Super Bowl is a great example of that. Each group was marketing Hass avocados, but no two groups were marketing in the same place."

The groups also continue to market independently. Mexico, which is the largest supplier of avocados to the U.S. market, offers fruit on a year-round basis, while California and Chile have complementary harvest seasons.

DeLyser says the board's marketing efforts have been a success. "If you look at the growth in availability of avocados over the past five to eight years, it's exploded. But despite the extensive growth in volume, we've kept the value of the product steady. That's because of increased marketing. Avocados still make good profits for the retailers."

pb

more at the checkout and you've got fewer to sell," Reynolds explains. "Hopefully, they'll eat more avocados. If you buy big ones, you'll have more to eat because the seed size is about the same as those found in smaller avocados."

Florida avocados tend to be much larger, although the price per pound is about the same, so each individual fruit is more expensive. In some areas, especially in the Northeast, where Florida avocados were standard until recently, a mixed display of Florida and Hass avocados often sells well.

Consider several tips when displaying avocados, as they can be a prickly fruit when not handled correctly. For example, they ripen quickly once warm, and consumers will shy away from a bin filled with overripe or mushy avocados. The ripening process is hastened by the presence of ethylene gas, which is produced in abundance by bananas and apples. Thus, avocados should not be stored at room temperature near displays of bananas or apples.

REDUCE LOSS

Ripening programs are one of the biggest factors driving increased avocado sales in recent years. These programs enable packers to deliver ripe, ready-to-eat avocados to produce departments.

According to Mission Produce's Tarleton, the company was among the first to develop this type of program. "In the past, there was

only hard fruit at the store, and consumers had a difficult time. These days, all the big producers have ripening programs where the fruit is ready to eat that day or in the next few days."

Ripeness was once a consistent obstacle to avocado sales. Only the most experienced consumers will buy a green avocado, and only because they know how to correctly ripen the fruit at home. Inexperienced consumers who buy green fruit are often disappointed when their avocados don't ripen, and they are turned off from the fruit. Also, shoppers are prone to squeezing green fruit, which bruises the avocado and causes increased shrinkage.

The advent of ripening programs directly addressed these problems. Unlike many kinds of fruit, avocados don't start to ripen until they are picked and the seed warms up. As they continue to ripen, they give off heat and ethylene gas, which hastens the ripening process. Thus, bins or pyramids of avocados held at room temperature will ripen very quickly and unevenly, leading to loss at the retail level.

Cold-chain management is essential at every step of the process to control ripening. In the field, avocados are moved from the tree to a chilled room as quickly as possible. Then, they are moved to ripening rooms before shipment to retailers. In the sealed ripening rooms, avocados are exposed to controlled levels of ethylene gas.



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Most of the large packers will sell avocados at any stage of ripening, from hard, green fruit to ready-to-eat fruit, depending on their customers' preferences. Most agree, however, that the key to increasing sales and decreasing loss is to stock ripe fruit. "Offering ripe avocados is the best way to sell more fruit," says Crane, Prime Produce's CEO and president. "Consumers want avocados that are ready to eat that night."

As ripening programs have taken off, some packers have gone one step further. Calavo, for example, offers a VIP program in which the packer measures the internal pressure of avocados to guarantee that only consistently ripe fruit is packed. Other packers offer some fruit that is ready to eat that day and some that will ripen in a few days.

The success of the ripening programs depends on communication with consumers. "Ripe Now" stickers are used throughout the industry to let shoppers know that the fruit they are holding is ready to eat that day. The stickers also reduce spoilage because consumers are less likely to squeeze the fruit and damage it. "No doubt about it, ripe fruit is the best thing you can do," asserts Calavo's Wedin. "It probably triples sales over non-ripe fruit. We've found that customers rely on the stickers and they stop pinching fruit."

Some experienced produce buyers in higher velocity markets still like to buy hard, green fruit in addition to their ripe fruit. This allows them to offer firmer avocados for consumers who want to wait a few days before eating their fruit. "We have a formula for retailers," reveals Rankin McDaniel, vice president of the McDaniel Fruit Co. in Fallbrook, CA. "We suggest they run multiple displays with multiple sizes of ripe fruit and include a portion of firmer fruit so the consumers can pick an avocado that is ready to eat immediately and one they can eat tomorrow."

CORRECTLY PRICE AVOCADOS

Successfully pricing avocados depends on the market and the industry's supply. There is a limit to how expensive avocados can get before consumers begin to shun the fruit. This is because avocados are typically impulse purchases, especially outside of heavy-use markets. "If you can price an avocado at less than \$1.50, it'll sell," Haggen's Reynolds states. "But people will resist if it gets above that. They begin to classify it as an extra item."

However, the California Avocado Commission's DeLyser reveals that price promotions on avocados are highly effective and consumers will come looking for avocados if



they are offered at lower prices.

"A lot of the promotion depends on the pricing," Reynolds adds. "If it's good, I'll run promotions every two to three weeks."

PROMOTE AVOCADOS OFTEN

In general, avocados are wonderfully easy fruit to promote. Although they are nationally available, avocados are still viewed as a specialty, and even exotic, fruit in many markets. Their close association with Mexican and Latino food, and their reputation as a health food, lends them an upscale air. Better yet, because they are now available year-round, they can occupy a permanent piece of real estate in the produce section, increasing sales and allowing for more consistent promotions.

A number of industry groups are actively working together in an effort to increase avocado consumption. In 2008, the industry spent \$40 million on advertisements nationwide to publicize the health benefits and versatility of avocados, according to Crane. At the retail level, avocado promotion is frequently tied to special events, especially Super Bowl and Cinco de Mayo, when avo-

"A lot of promotion depends on the pricing. If it's good, I'll run promotions every two to three weeks."

**— Lee Reynolds
Haggen Inc.**

cados are used in guacamole.

However, the calendar is full of dates that can be used to promote avocados. "I always try to do Thanksgiving and Christmas and Super Bowl, obviously," says Reynolds. "I like to do a Fourth of July promotion, but it's tough because you only have California avocados at that time and we're waiting for the Chilean avocados to come in."

Avocado trade groups run their own generic promotions, often tied to the region where the fruit originated. Both California and Mexican avocados are promoted based on their origin. For example, APEAM recently completed a three-month marketing campaign that encouraged the use of Mexican avocados. The association's efforts resulted in a 79 percent increase in Mexican avocado sales in Texas and a 25 percent increase in Chicago at stores that promoted avocados during the campaign. Additionally, Mexico secured the category leadership position for a second year in a row by supplying 70 percent of the avocado market. "Many times, people going to the store aren't looking for avocados from Mexico, but if they see that sign, they might buy more," states Escobedo, marketing director for APEAM.

Florida avocados are marketed under the brand SlimCado, which was developed by Brooks Tropicals LLC in Homestead, FL to point out the health benefits of Florida avocados, reveals Mary Ostlund, director of marketing. SlimCados contain 35 percent fewer calories and one-third less fat than their Hass counterparts. "We tell people that if you want to make guacamole, use a Hass avocado because you're not concerned about the extra fat in a party dip. But if you want to eat more avocados on a regular basis, use the SlimCado. It still has the avocado taste, but it's less oily. This is a way to grow a new product."

pb

San Fran Sophisticate

San Francisco terminal markets will continue to be in high demand, despite a troubled economy and industry happenings.

BY MIKE DUFF

The San Francisco Bay area is home to about 7.2 million people, 765,000 of whom reside in the city itself, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The universities and high-tech industries in the region make for a large population of highly educated consumers. At the same time, the region has long been multicultural, and more than a third of San Francisco's inhabitants are foreign-born. Strong Asian and Latino elements add their own flavor to a mainstream culture that is, in itself, diverse. Through the years, various population pulses have brought a range of influences, including Italian culinary traditions and a hippie catalyst to organic eating.

The strength of the food culture has a powerful influence on both San Francisco's terminal markets: the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market (SFWPM) in the southeastern region of the city and the Golden Gate Produce Terminal (GGPT), which is a few miles further beyond in the community of South San Francisco.

The vibrant restaurant scene in San Francisco has long been critical to the wholesale infrastructure in the Bay Area. Still, in the 1970s and 80s, terminal markets seemed destined to decline as food retailing consolidated and brought wholesalers less business. Yet, in the Bay Area particularly, changing demographics, consumer interest in new kinds of food and an increasing awareness of the nutritional benefits of fruits and vegetables have helped to reinvigorate independent grocers, and through them, the terminal markets as well.

San Francisco's independent grocers in the Bay Area serve many ethnic populations, but not exclusively, as cross-shopping is common and influences cross demographic lines. Thus, a greengrocer in a more mainstream community is likely to carry a wide range of peppers and Asian vegetables, such as Bok Choy, as everyday items. In the meantime, it's more common than ever to find customers from other ethnic backgrounds shopping in Latin or Asian grocery stores.

But it isn't all about ethnicity, either. San Francisco's restaurants and food retailers have built upon an early interest in organics to embrace broader trends in sustainability and promote locally grown produce. "San Francisco dining is very seasonal, up to a point where it almost becomes amazing," says Michael Sullivan, chef and partner at San Francisco's Spruce. "People look at cuisine differently here than the rest of country."

The terminal markets are evolving with the SFWPM reviewing plans for new and expanded facilities in a project planned to launch in 2013. In the meantime, it's weighing in on local issues. Some activists have questioned the contribution of wholesale markets to a local food culture that favors grower-direct deliveries to neighborhood restaurants and farmers' markets. In response, Michael Janis, general manager of the SFWPM, noted that the market wholesalers are vital to local grocers who supply a breadth and depth of produce to neighborhoods and even those growers who do a direct business as a distribution channel they depend on as they grow. Looking to demonstrate that wholesale markets aren't antagonistic to direct distribution, the SFWPM is even considering establishing a farmer's market within its own facilities. At the same time, business is diversifying at the GGPT to serve a rapidly evolving clientele, sometimes speaking new languages, sometimes looking for new services including that of the brokers,



who have proliferated in the facility.

The scene in San Francisco suggests that the terminal markets will be in heavy demand despite industry gyrations and macroeconomic stumbles.

Changing Demographics

Food is a significant part of social life in the San Francisco Bay Area with restaurants and small produce-centric groceries critical to the local culture, as are the pair of terminal markets that serve them.

The revitalization of smaller grocery and produce markets in and around the Bay Area has been a boon to the GGPT in South San Francisco, states Peter Carcione, president of Carcione's Fresh Produce Co. Inc. "The little guy is doing well now. This wasn't the case seven or eight years ago."

"Neighborhoods are intermingled today. So the Chinese stores not only sell Chinese vegetables but also butter lettuce. A few years ago, ethnic markets were only selling to their same ethnic crowd."

**—Peter Carcione
Carcione Fresh Produce Inc.**

Supermarket industry developments in California over the course of the current decade have helped put local small grocery and produce retailers on a more equal playing field with the big chains. "All the insurance rates went up. Workman's comp went through roof," Carcione points out. "Now, the little guy can buy something from the wholesale produce market, make a decent profit on it and still be under the big guys."

Already a health-conscious region, the Bay Area has embraced the nutrition message consistently reiterated by doctors and public health authorities, Carcione asserts. What's more, an exploratory impulse has driven consumers to cross ethnic lines when shopping and dining out, which eventually drives demand as consumers favor a wider variety of food beyond common staples.

"Neighborhoods are intermingled today," Carcione states. "So the Chinese stores not only sell Chinese vegetables but also butter lettuce. A few years ago, ethnic markets were only selling to their same ethnic crowd."

Given all the interest, the wholesale markets have become a more important resource for restaurants and independent produce and

The Mechanics Of Organics

Although organic sales may not be growing at quite the same pace they were a few years ago, the sector continues to expand in San Francisco. For example, Earl's Organic Produce is developing two businesses simultaneously, according to owner Earl Herrick, one as a regional wholesaler delivering anywhere within a 1-day turnaround drive and another as a broker shipping beyond that range.

The company is also working with Safeway to supplement its existing organic produce distribution as it expands in the natural products arena. Essentially, Earl's is acting as a facilitator, Herrick says, working with the supermarket chain on shorts and to ensure a consistent supply.

The economy hasn't yet had a significant impact on Earl's business, although a bit of softness has suggested itself. "We had a good Thanksgiving. We may have felt it a little in the Christmas season, but nothing serious," states Herrick. "We didn't lay anyone off. San Francisco is a very mature organic market. That being said, the competition has grown and you've seen market share find its own level. You will see customers go and some new ones come, but it keeps us honest."

According to Herrick, early signs suggest that consumers will cut back on higher-priced products before more commonplace organic purchases, such as "the imported cherries at \$10-a-pound rather than Navel oranges at \$1.99. But we haven't been able to make sense of that altogether yet. People are a little more conservative, definitely. People who were buying organic all along have a strong bond, though. If that's why they buy organic, then people who still have enough money are still buying. A small proportion can't afford to do that anymore. Price does matter, but there is an understanding of the true cost of food among people who buy organics."

Organic consumers in San Francisco also tend to support grower-direct delivery to restaurants and farmers' markets. The debate over the role of wholesale produce markets in supplying organic and local produce has been relatively fierce in San Francisco.

The produce markets are making a case that they have an important role as a secondary distribution point for smaller growers, who otherwise go directly through restaurants or the plethora of farmers' markets that operate in San Francisco's neighborhoods.

Herrick admits he doesn't take a position against growers going direct, and even encourages some smaller ones to do so. Ultimately, he believes the debate is healthy, and the diversity of supply still sweeps attention in the right direction, generating more interest in produce and an understanding that wholesalers contribute to the availability of wholesome food.

In the region around San Francisco, organic growing continues to expand, which has created opportunity for innovative businesses. Pacific Organic Produce, for example, today combines two operations that target the natural food and drink market. In one, it's the San Francisco-based marketing office for over 100 growers from California, Washington and Latin America. For 15 years, it has helped generate demand by promoting produce — now mostly under its own label — and helped growers move products quickly and directly to wholesalers and retailers.

According to Pacific brand manager Sara Clow, "We package as much as we can under the Purity Organic label, but we continue to work with some growers and support their established labels such as with Twin Girls Farms. Some people will still seek Twin Girls Farms in market so it's still a label."

Pacific Organic ships to major chains including Whole Foods and Safeway, but its customers are wide-ranging and include wholesalers, and not just in the United States. It has a major business in Canada, ships apples to the United Kingdom and citrus to Asia.

While organic is strongest in particular hot spots, business continues to gain for the company and its growers, notes Clow. In part, that's been based on a shrinking differential between conventional and organic products driven by the expansion of the grower network. "Prices are getting smaller based on the most basic laws of supply and demand."

Pacific Organic's other major operation is its growing Watsonville, CA-based juice business, which has continued to expand in retailing by adding the Duane Reade drug store chain in the New York Metropolitan area to their distribution points. This is based on a decision to aid growers who were dealing with a larger volume of culls as their businesses expanded.

Clow asserts that juicing provides a more lucrative alternative to deal with the 15 percent or so of product that doesn't meet standards. These days, Pacific Organic is working to expand availability of key items, such as apples, across the calendar.

In contrast to the demand for locally grown and seasonal product, many consumers continue to look for favorite products year-round. In an effort to meet their needs, distributors are working to find better product internationally, and working to improve logistics to meet the high-quality demands that local and seasonal products have established.

Pacific Organic is tapping organic sources in countries including Argentina, Chile and Mexico. "We want to fill out gaps to provide consumers good quality organic products consistently year around," Clow says.

pb

grocery retailers who have built their businesses around the availability of high-quality fruit and vegetable products.

"The most important advantage of the wholesale produce market is that the buyer can come down, look at it and taste it before buying it," says Carcione. "The big stores are doing the best job they can buying good labels and the quality is mostly good, but there's an advantage to being able to pick up a piece of fruit and look at it. We had cantaloupes this morning from Guatemala. If you didn't know, you wouldn't believe it. The buyer has to be able to see what's available, and this option makes produce departments more exciting."

Business on the GGPT has gotten more complex, and Franzella Produce Inc. has found ways to respond. Joe Franzella, a salesman, and part of the younger generation at the long-time family operated San Francisco produce wholesaler, notes, "Ethnic customers are buying more than ever before, and we have less of the traditional American stores." This evolving demographic results in a number of implications. For one thing, ethnic customers may have a particular sense of how quality ought to balance with cost. As a result, "We might have more No. 2s," Franzella admits. "We still have to have good stuff, but the con-

sumer is changing a little bit." The evolution of the market is also making sourcing a little more complicated. "We now have more kinds of products to sell," Franzella says.

"Ethnic customers are buying more than ever before, and we have less of the traditional American stores."

**—Joe Franzella
Franzella Produce Inc.**

As the market has evolved, so has Franzella's staff, which includes salesman Abel Alvarez, whose responsibilities include serving Spanish-speaking customers. Alvarez notes that the product range at Franzella has indeed shifted with the client base, which also includes restaurants and shorts-seeking supermarkets with increasingly diverse needs. So today, Franzella prides itself on the range of chiles it offers on a daily basis as part of its Asian and Latin vegetable selection.

Confronting Challenges

Yet, not every factor influencing business is indigenous to the produce world, and Alvarez remarks that the economy seems to be


impacting about 20 percent of Franzella's business. The slowdown is unpredictable, with customers ordering somewhat closer to need rather than making more drastic adjustments while simultaneously asking for a few special orders or special imports, concentrating on what's in season and in good supply.

Philip Franzella, Franzella's president, adds, "We're in a good spot, but money's tighter. People aren't buying things they don't have to replace. People shop around more. They're stretching dollars. As a result, grocers and chains aren't buying too far ahead."

Franzella's desire to serve the gamut of distribution options is evident in the brokerage it currently operates from a second facility at Golden Gate. Nearly alone in the market when it began operating a few years ago, Jim Kramer, a brokerage account manager, admits Franzella brokers have seen competition spring up and become more intense, making service and relationships increasingly important. As economic factors impose themselves, maintaining relationships becomes even more complex as customers' demand for high quality is tempered by a need to hold down cost. "They still want quality, but price has become more important," Kramer says.

Operating out of a facility located just south of the Golden Gate market, Gilbert

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Peter Carcione of Carcione's
Fresh Produce Co. Inc.



Leo Rolandelli of Jacobs
Malcolm & Burt



Stanley Corriea of
Stanley Produce Co. Inc.



Gilbert Papazian of
Lucky Strike Farms Inc.

Papazian, president of Lucky Strike Farms Inc., observes many developments that are impacting local produce-based businesses, with the economy being just one. Lucky Strike's business revolves around growing and distributing lettuce and carrots harvested in California and points further south into Mexico as the season continues to progress.

Lucky Strike is taking a cautious approach to growth, although it's now exploring the Salt Lake City market. However, to remain effective, the company has to improve its standing in the markets it already supplies. "It's who understands the customers best," Papazian says. "They want your input. We learn their businesses well enough so we can counsel them on what they need to do, help them think through problems and compete in the market. It's not just about pricing, but logistics and how can we help our guys compete."

While most produce wholesalers and brokers in San Francisco claim their businesses are only beginning to feel the pinch from the recession, Amy Richardson, vice president of John Demartini Co. Inc., reveals demand has suffered significantly in the economic downturn as the restaurants who buy from the company have seen their business decrease. Likewise, some grocers have seen demand begin to shrink and supermarkets have less need to buy shorts, all of which hurts the company's key citrus business. Thankfully, the company's Fresh Express and tofu businesses have helped sustain it, observes Richardson, but more aggressive action has become important. "We're trying to find new business and looking for new customers." The SFWPM slot next to John Demartini is open at the moment, and she hopes talk of a major player from the South San Francisco produce market taking it

will prove true. Its presence would generate more traffic at the John Demartini storefront.

John Pizza, president of Washington Vegetable Co., reveals his business has actually been impacted by the economy in Japan. His export business is centered around the Pacific Islands, including the Marshalls, Northern Marianas, American Samoa and Palau, locales that have seen their regular Japanese tourist traffic drop as the global economy has sputtered. Overall, though, Pizza said his business, based on commodity and specialty items sold to grocery stores, has continued steadily. His inventory is designed to service a range of independent grocers, including Latino and Asian specialty stores.

Pizza notes that despite cross-shopping of various grocery stores by multiple demographics, specialty wholesalers that service ethnic outlets will continue to have a place in the market. Distinctions continue to exist, particularly in how ethnic consumers want to shop. "If you go into Hispanic areas in San Francisco, like the Mission District, you are going to find an Hispanic grocery model that is more similar to the model you would see in Mexico," Pizza says. "The Hispanic population in the Mission District is more likely to shop at an Hispanic grocer than Safeway."

Pizza said a major upcoming consideration



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Lauren and David Camarda of North Bay

for San Francisco wholesalers regards regulatory demands and information processing associated with issues such as country-of-origin labeling (COOL). Wholesalers need to get on top of those issues to help their customers who turn to them for support.

In the developing Bay Area market, produce distributors face several issues, but they continue to hold their own, a testament to their diligence. "Change is constant, but evolutionary," states Grant Hunt, president of Grant J. Hunt Co., located in Oakland, CA. "Hopefully, we've adjusted to the times." Indeed, Grant J. Hunt is celebrating its 75th anniversary, "so we've been doing something right," he adds. "The bottom line is this is a simple business. You recognize what consumers want and fill it."

Hunt identifies food safety, for example, as a critical trend going forward, and the company has invested in upgrading systems to meet more stringent international standards. Sustainability will also have a powerful impact on the produce industry in San Francisco particularly, given local consumer interest in the subject. Hunt cautions that produce industry participants have to weigh in on long-term issues such as sustainability. He urges support of industry sustainability standards and is against nationally determined criteria policies. "They should be fluid and changing market standards," he insists.

Leo Rolandelli, president of Jacobs Malcolm & Burt, says another issue that's becoming more urgent is the impact international competition has been having on local growers. Asparagus, a major business for the company, is just one of the crops being affected. At the same time, low rainfall totals are making it hard for many growers to maintain their production volume and quality.

Still, the economy bears watching as some are concerned that more expensive specialty items might bear the brunt of consumer thrift, Rolandelli notes. Many higher end products are holding their own right now, and the Jacobs Malcolm & Burt asparagus business is doing all right. Fortunately for the company, big-box retailers, such as Costco, have been

Will A Faltering Economy Flummox The Produce Industry?

A consensus has not yet emerged among wholesalers and other distributors regarding the manner in which the recession will impact the produce business over the next year. Point of view is influenced by market position, of course. Some commodity sellers and brokers predict that high-end specialties and value-added products will be most effected, and suggest that consumers will turn more to bulk staples.

On the other hand, specialty fruit and vegetable providers note that many high-end restaurants and gourmet retailers continue to see relatively strong traffic, even if some are off a bit. They contend consumers will continue to treat themselves, even if they shift a little more by eating at home the majority of the time.

Still, produce wholesalers and distributors are taking steps to cope with a gradual softening of demand. Everado Alvarez, a salesman with Franzella Produce Inc., says the wholesaler itself has become more cautious about its inventory, keeping its assortment trimmer than in the recent past and just a little less deep to cut back on shrink in the softer environment. Yet even though Franzella is trying to keep business tight, the company will adjust to the degree that it has what customers are actively seeking. "We sell everything and try to have everything we can here," Alvarez states.

Like others on the market faced with encroaching credit and economic concerns, Stanley Corriea, president of Stanley Produce Co. Inc., admits he has tightened up on payment terms as the recession has deepened. "People we sell got used to their ways. They got used to being 30 or 40 days out, and we used to say, 'Not a problem.'

Now, it's 30 days or we won't sell you. It's affected our relationship with people we've worked with for years and years."

David Camarda, vice president of North Bay Produce Co. Inc., expresses that San Francisco generally has become more conscious of the recession. "It's not just produce," he says. "The economy is on everyone's mind right now, and everyone is making adjustments. Credit's tight. You have to be on top of receivables. People we've had on 30 days want 60. We can't do it."

Camarda has cut back on the frequency of deliveries to some of his restaurant customers from six to seven days a week to three to five. The change has not only been accepted by customers, but also appreciated. "They don't have to invest the energy on accepting another load and changing prices," Camarda explains.

Leo Rolandelli, president of Jacobs Malcolm & Burt, says the market will carefully watch the Obama administration's efforts to bolster the economy, while simultaneously gauging the consumer response to the recession and how they must react. "Produce prices are lowering in general," expresses Rolandelli. "Growers realize they have to price their products to move."

Even upscale grocery chains, such as San Francisco, CA-based Mollie Stone's Markets and Whole Foods, are being forced to reassess their assortments and the price elasticity consumers will tolerate on food, in part because of the proliferation of farmers markets offering bargain alternatives on high-quality produce items in the recession. "They are going to have to be more competitive with prices, and I would even put Safeway in that group," Rolandelli says. **pb**

doing relatively well in the recession. "We do a lot of business with those people," he says.

The Importance Of Foodservice

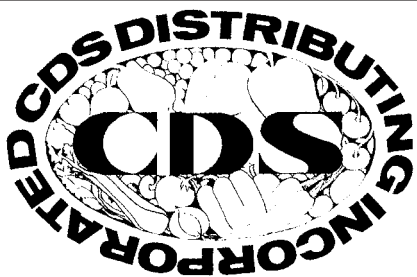
Given its diverse, educated population, it's not surprising that San Francisco's food culture is vibrant. Restaurants have played an important role in keeping the produce business relatively strong as the economy has weakened. "We see foodservice as the greatest, most effective sampling mechanism for our industry," Hunt says.

William Wilkinson, president and co-owner of Greenleaf, a foodservice-oriented supplier in the SFWPM, compares the Bay Area to the South of France in terms of the importance of food culture, "It's a place where people take a great interest in food. It's a food theater in many cases." Wilkinson credits

restaurateur Alice Waters, who founded Chez Panisse in Berkeley, just across the bay from San Francisco, with setting the tone of the region's food culture. Her restaurant emphasizes informality, but is serious about selling fresh food with a menu that changes every day based on what's fresh.

Greenleaf has evolved with the local food scene, and was a pioneer in developing salad mixes for the American market, Wilkinson points out. Today, the company not only delivers daily from a catalog of 1,100 produce items — 6,000 items are available year-round — but provides dairy, bread, frozen food and specialty products, too.

Business remains strong because the produce industry remains a committed contributor to the region's food culture. In fact, Wilkinson believes that the foodie culture has helped



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shield San Francisco from the worst effects of the recession. "Things are going alright in San Francisco," he admits. "We're feeling it a little, like everybody else, but maybe less here. There is more of a commitment to eating out."

In line with Grant Hunt, Stanley Corriea, president of San Francisco, CA-based Stanley Produce Co. Inc., agrees food consciousness has made food safety a bigger issue over the past few years, as consumers have seen more problems affecting produce. He believes wholesalers must take responsibility for the distribution chain up to and through their facility because consumers are asking questions and expect diligence. "There are concerns about mixed salad and spinach. With the spinach scare last year, the whole cold chain has become a bigger issue and ensuring things are properly maintained in the cold chain the whole time," explains Corriea. "It's important for the consumers. Something comes along and people panic; then it's a lingering thing. If I'm thinking of buying wild mushrooms and I don't know the source, I'm not going to do it. No way."

In his specialty business, which serves other wholesalers as well as restaurants, Corriea has seen a proliferation of interest in organic and local products, in large part because of quality concerns. "Many end users, such as restaurants, are all going to local cuisine now because they're interested in what's fresh and what's available at good quality for a good presentation," he observes.

While food safety is a long-term, institutional issue, the economy is one that has become more pressing. "I think people are looking for deals," Corriea continues. "A little of that has hit our business."

Washington Vegetable's Pizza provides locally grown produce as part of his business. He notes, though, that locally grown is more of a restaurant issue and that, depending on how the term is defined, just about all the fruits and vegetables he carries are locally grown seven or eight months of the year, since most nationwide production is coming from nearby valleys. Still, despite ambiguities surrounding the issue, Pizza says local produce is becoming more significant to some consumers, and wholesalers will need to address their preference to the extent that it impacts their customers.

Seasonal produce is a focal point for Cooks Co. Produce, as its foodservice clientele associates local product with freshness and environmental friendliness. "Our customers are always excited by the seasonal stuff," declares owner, Ric Tombari. "Now, they're using things like sour oranges, cocktail grapefruits, mid-season mandarins. In about a week, we'll start moving on to mid-season fruit, and they

follow that with us. By mid-February, we'll see local asparagus from Stockton."

Cooks' customers also like to take advantage of local events and emphasized Asian items as the Chinese New Year approaches. Cooks offers vegetables with shoots, for example, which symbolize longevity in Chinese culture. "We use a greengrocer's approach," Tombari explains. "Every week, we bring new stuff to people to keep their creative juices flowing." In fact, Cooks is so dedicated to keeping its chefs informed about what's in season, it produces a newsletter with weekly trends. The company even sends out new and novel items on its trucks for chefs to sample.

Cooks is among the restaurant suppliers

Restaurants Remain Relevant

The restaurant scene in downtown San Francisco remains intensely creative. Despite beginning to feel the impact of the economic recession, chefs continue to afford themselves with a range of resources to keep customers eating out.

Joshua Nudd (below right), executive chef for the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, located a couple of blocks off Market Street and featuring the restaurant Silks, says the preference for organic and local produce in San Francisco encourages restaurants to explore those ingredients, which are amply available through restaurant distribution, as well as from farmers markets. Healthful eating is also an issue, making the role of fruits and vegetables in diet and

restaurant dishes more prominent.

Orlando Pagan, chef de cuisine, (left) reveals he arrived at the Mandarin Oriental several years ago



with a background in French and Italian cuisine, and quickly had to learn Asian cooking, given the hotel's emphasis on combining Pacific Rim and Western styles. That penchant suits the market nicely. The Bay Area has long been a crossroads where East and West meet, and the local food culture is informed by that intersection. To that end, Silks' menu offers dishes, such as Braised Pork Belly with Black Truffle Potatoes and Matsutake Mushrooms.

Nudd admits that despite the relative strength of the restaurant's scene, the economy is having an impact. As a result, Silks is offering customers options off the normal 3-, 4- and 8-course menus in part to accommodate its normal business customers who have been subject to office cutbacks. "Expense accounts are getting restricted and eliminated," he says.

pb

saying they've seen little impact from the economy. In fact, the company is expanding, taking on more space adjacent to its current facility in the market, following fourth quarter and early 2009 sales growth. "Part of our culture in San Francisco is that people want good food and expect great restaurants," Tombari says. "We haven't seen any lack of business. We have a young enough population that people realize there will be an upside to the economy eventually."

Shing Ho, owner of Vegiworks Inc., remarks that the demand for local and seasonal produce is strong and comes from a range of his foodservice accounts, including the Google campus in Mountain View, yet many

accounts want key items available year-round, and he does his best to accommodate them. "We try to encourage customers to visit our Web site to help them plan menus that include seasonal vegetables and, if that isn't enough, we try to order something from Australia or Chile," he states.

The dynamism of the San Francisco market is a big plus for Vegiworks, Ho says, and so is the close proximity to the California Valleys that provide much of the produce that flows through the facility. Challenges come from farmers going directly to restaurants and shifting priorities in the recession, both of which he is addressing. "For the past couple of years, we've seen the need for better customer ser-

vice, more hands-on customer service," Ho admits. "Given the economy this year, people are looking for more value, not the highest prices or lowest price, but value in general, so we're more hands-on trying to source local, sustainable produce, but at value."

David Camarda, vice president of North Bay Produce Co. Inc., says the company's business has been bolstered by the location of many of its clients. "Our customers are more in Sonoma and Solano County, and a lot of those areas are touristy and affluent." In fact, North Bay's business is good enough that the company decided to expand recently, taking what had been the Muffei space to distribute on the market. **pb**

SAN FRANCISCO RESTAURANT PROFILE

Coi Puts Produce On Parade

Chef Daniel Patterson approaches his produce-centric cuisine with innovation and admiration.

BY MIKE DUFF

In a restaurant community where ideas often drive, rather than inform, cuisine, Daniel Patterson, chef and owner of Coi isn't an ideologue. Rather, he is someone who wants to integrate local values into the experience of eating at his restaurant, and is aware that hospitality is his first duty.

Patterson's dedication to ingredients is renown, and fresh fruits and vegetables tend to have a strong influence on his dishes. These come from many different sources, including his own home where he grows a variety of goodies, such as edible flowers. He also visits farms to harvest some of the fruits and vegetables he includes in his constantly changing menu. He uses more conventional sources, too, including local farmers' markets, and his reputation is to check the entire range of ingredients before incorporating them into his food. Ultimately though, he wishes to incorporate the fruits, vegetables and other foods available in the regions surrounding San Francisco to excite his guests with the bounty of the surrounding environment.

Some restaurateurs have developed their own ideas about what local food traditions should reflect. Patterson, though, starts with the ingredients and then expresses their specific qualities through a wide range of techniques rather than following a rigidly traditional approach. The end result is a harmonious dish that has the capacity to surprise and satisfy guests at his restaurant. "Our phi-



Daniel Patterson, chef and owner of Coi.

losophy is to use the best ingredients and then keep an open mind about how they can be used," he says. "I don't like dogma."

Integrating the entire eating experience is central to Patterson's approach to food. The understated earth tones and natural wood tables that set the stage in Coi's dining room reflect the name of the restaurant — pronounced "kwa" — as well as the style of the food. Customers can choose between two menus, an 11-course tasting menu available in the 28-seat dining room and a standard, 13-item menu served in the 20-seat lounge.

Patterson's approach to food is experimental. He explains he is constantly on the lookout for new ingredients and combinations he can develop into fresh dishes. He has no set criteria or agenda to apply, beyond seeking ingredients he can combine in flavorful and unique way. Take a signature menu item, Pink Grapefruit, for example. The menu alerts diners that the grapefruit is combined with ginger, tarragon and black pepper, which suggests it won't be the typical scoop-and-slurp experience. Yet that hardly hints at the preparation, which renders the grapefruit and its accompa-

nying ingredients as a mousse.

Patterson's technique relies on the essence of fruits and vegetables to generate the dishes. San Francisco food critic Michael Bauer rated a Patterson dish consisting of cherry tomatoes suspended in gelatinous tomato water topped with miniature basil leaves as the best tomato dish he had ever eaten. Young Artichokes Poached in New McEvoy Olive Oil accompanied by Fennel, Puntarelle, Rose Finn Apple Potato and Rangpur Lime is another example of Patterson's ability to combine the flavors of various fruits and vegetables to create a unique dish guaranteed to surprise diners.

Patterson's method in creating such dishes is broadly philosophical, and he refuses simple designations. Rather, he combines concepts and flavors that interest him. He draws heavily from the San Francisco scene, seeking wild mushrooms in the hills, but he has no illusions about some unspoiled wilderness to be rediscovered or innocent garden to be revisited. Patterson believes the Bay Area cultural traditions are just as important as its geography, and that each one has intimately influenced the other. Thus, he feels free to combine them as he chooses. "It's more about a connection to the land and how it informs the diner's experience rather than promoting an agenda," he states. The end result Patterson intends for diners at Coi is great food and a fine night out, rather than instruction in cooking high mindedness. **pb**

Andronico's

A longstanding institution revamps itself to stay current in the San Francisco food scene.

BY MIKE DUFF

Andronico's has been a stalwart institution within San Francisco's gourmet grocery scene for 80 years, and when the grocery operator decided to remodel its flagship location to satisfy the expectations of Bay-Area consumers, it put produce center stage. President and CEO, Bill Andronico, is the third generation to run the operation since his grandfather, Frank Andronico, opened the first store in Berkeley in 1929. According to Andronico, produce represents what makes Andronico's unique, along with freshness, variety and a particular attention to the act of eating.

The produce presentation at the flagship location is piled high and arranged in visually arresting displays that include undulating racks in a vertical dry case, demonstrating Andronico's commitment to innovation within San Francisco's gourmet food scene.

Andronico's was determined to make a statement with its remodel, part of a \$15 million investment in enhancing the 8-unit chain. Completed over this past summer, the remodeling effort is part of a major turnaround. Two years earlier, Andronico's rolled back an expansion initiative, shuttering two stores after closing a distribution center six months earlier. When it decided to undertake a remodel, it wanted to show San Franciscans it was back on its A-game. "We wanted to make a fresh impression," declares Andronico. "We wanted to provide a reminder of what the foundation was for our stores, and that's one major reason we have produce in the front."

Customers of the San Francisco store encounter produce even before entering the store. A fully encased enclosure guarding the entranceway is filled with mobile carts offering apples, strawberries, pineapples, oranges, cantaloupes and other fruits. Inside, the showcase dry case is compartmentalized on a top and bottom tier, while the middle space is divided by a shelf that snakes along in curves dividing yellow, red, orange and green peppers among other items along its length. Andronico's intentionally designed the display with visual impact in mind and arranged it in a determined color scheme that mingles green items with white, red, yellow and orange throughout. In fact, he even concedes it isn't easy for every consumer to pluck top-shelf



items out of the display, but that's not a problem. The store is designed to encourage interaction between shoppers and employees.

"You're always dealing with premium levels of quality and staging is obviously critical to doing that in its most dramatic way while remaining practical," Andronico maintains. "We wanted to do something eye-catching, so we did this customized wave like the interlocking pieces of a puzzle."

Several table displays that cascade into cases are near the entrance. They provide a sense of heft and splash the colors of oranges, pears and other fruit into the department. To the right of the entrance is a wall case with 20 feet of clamshell berries that lead into tubs of fresh-cut fruit displayed in a 4-foot front that angles off the wall. This gives way to a section of refrigerated juices and tub salads that angle off it. An extensive salad bar closes the produce department and leads on to the deli.

Weged between the dry case and the fruit displays, Andronico's mounts another critical display. On a January day, organic apples took center stage, while other fruit filled it out. But it was the addition atop the main product component that told the tale. There, Andronico's offered gourmet cheddar cheese and Pinot Grigio wine. Cross-merchandising and sampling are critical to the store's selling strategy. Indeed, sampling stations flank the cascading table displays.

Throughout the store, satellite displays and fixed, protruding shelves, or pop-outs, offer a



mix of novel items associated with the categories offered in the aisle and cross-merchandised items. With produce, wine and cheese get heavy emphasis in the store.

"The dry tables are a place that allows us to tie-in merchandise from one area to another," Andronico reveals. "But what we're looking for here are not the usual customized islands. The displays are designed and constructed to achieve just the right fit. Just like we do on the end caps, we make an impression of mass and abundance on the customer. Where we do cross-merchandising and tastings, we want to slow them down and show them something they weren't exposed to before. Where we add cheese and beverages, beer or wine, we add interest and surprise. Then we sample. Any time we put food into people's mouths and slow them down, we have a chance to show them taste is what we have to offer."

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Sweet Potatoes Take Center Stage

Foodservice operators take advantage of the low cost of sweet potatoes in many unique ways.

BY JODEAN ROBBINS

The tried-and-true sweet potato is providing trendy and economical ways for foodservice operators to differentiate themselves. "The use of sweet potatoes in foodservice has increased in a slow, steady pace for the past nine to 10 years," says Sue Johnson-Langdon, executive director of the North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission (NCSPS), in Benson, NC. "Americans are looking for something new and unique in their dining experience, and restaurants offering a baked sweet potato rather than a baked potato give the consumer the power of choice. The availability of value-added products for sweet potatoes, such as french fries, seasoned chunks and fresh-cut sweet potatoes has also fueled the increase."

"More sweet potatoes are showing up on menus," agrees Stephanie Tyson, chef and co-owner of Sweet Potatoes, a Restaurant, in Winston-Salem, NC, where sweet potatoes take center stage. "Their versatility and nutritional value make them popular with operators and consumers alike."

According to Sondria Reynolds, former business development director for Nixa, MO-based Market Fresh Produce LLC, "Many restaurants, especially white-tablecloth, have added sweet potatoes to their menus as a complement or alternative to white potatoes."

As sweet potatoes increasingly appear on restaurant menus, foodservice garners a bigger share of shipments. "Based on what we're seeing, there are more shipments going to foodservice and you see the product more frequently on menus," states Charles Walker, executive secretary of the U.S. Sweet Potato Council, in Columbia, SC. "For example, the USDA [U.S. Department of



Photo courtesy of North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission

Sweet Potato Custard with Warm Caramel Sauce is a delicious dessert that uses sweet potatoes in a new and unexpected way.

Agriculture] Market News Service out of Raleigh, NC, reported 84,000 cartons shipped during the Jan. 4 - 7 period, of which 27,000 went to foodservice, or about 30 percent."

"Sweet potatoes are holding up sales-wise because the organizations have done a great job promoting the health messages and benefits, and the chefs are doing a good job of cooking them," explains Jimmy Burch, partner with Burch Farms, in Faison, NC. "It's becoming a mainstream item."

Although business may have slowed due to the hit some restaurants are taking with the economy, sweet potatoes are still an

integral part of the foodservice future. "The overall usage of sweet potatoes in foodservice is increasing," declares George Wooten, president of Wayne E. Bailey Produce Co., in Chadbourne, NC. "The economy is tough for foodservice right now and some sweet potato movement may be holding its own because we're cannibalizing on white potato business. However, overall the business is slower right now even though sweet potatoes are an increasing trend."

Ryan Quebedeaux, co-owner of Harold Quebedeaux Produce Inc., in Mansura, LA, and a member of the Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission in Baton Rouge, LA, agrees.

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"The overall use of sweet potatoes in foodservice has increased the past five years, however, they seem to have leveled off this past year."

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Sweet potatoes can actually help the bottom line of a foodservice operation, especially in the current economic climate. "In a tight economy, sweet potatoes can be substituted for higher-value products like butternut squash," suggests Wooten. "Operators can substitute sweet potato soup for butternut squash soup, buying jumbo sweet potatoes for a good price. This would be a smart replacement since foodservice is trying to maximize efficiency on meals."

"Sweet potatoes can be much cheaper than many products, and you can do many things with them that turn out to be more cost efficient," agrees Tyson. "Especially if you're using the bigger size sweet potatoes, which provide a better value per pound."

Debbie Lee, marketing specialist with J. Roland Wood Farms Inc., in Benson, NC, explains the value: "Based on a 40-pound box, the cost per pound is about 35¢."

"The product represents a good value to the foodservice operator," adds Walker. "There are also two or three different sizes available, which offers operators versatility."

Operators can substitute sweet potatoes for a variety of different products. Tim Groody, executive chef for Sonoma Restaurant Group, a Charlotte, NC-based company that owns three restaurants in the area, frequently substitutes them for potatoes and squash, because, "They are very versatile to work with."

Wooten has another suggestion. "You can also use sweet potatoes in place of carrots, such as shreds for salads and raw sticks," says Wooten. "This could be a good substitution if carrot supplies get tight." The sweet potato may also be an easier way to change portion size without the customer thinking they're being cheated. "In foodservice, everybody is downsizing portions and trying to make the meal a value," says Wooten. "Operators can easily downsize a baked potato for a smaller sweet potato without a noticeable difference — changing the size by two or four ounces."

VERSATILITY COUNTS

The flexibility of the sweet potato is another big benefit for foodservice. According to Quebedeaux, "They can be incorporated into almost any dish."

"The use of sweet potatoes is increasing because of their versatility and also because they have more flavor than regular potatoes," says Groody. "Foodservice is always

"In a tight economy, sweet potatoes can be substituted for higher-value products like butternut squash."

**— George E. Wooten,
Wayne E. Bailey
Produce Co.**

looking for something new that boasts multiple applications."

The compatibility of the product allows it to be incorporated into existing recipes and with typical kitchen equipment. "The sweet potato is compatible with the white potato or other products so you don't need different techniques or equipment, yet it offers a different taste," says Wooten. "It is very foodservice friendly."

Additionally, since the product conserves flavor and other important properties even after reheating and storage, restaurants can utilize all the cooked product. "Many restaurants offer a baked sweet potato and capitalize on turning unserved product into other recipes such as cheesecakes, pies and casseroles," reports Lee. "If they do it right, there shouldn't be any waste with sweet potatoes. The sweet potato can be frozen after it's cooked and it still maintains its quality. It can also be warmed the next day and will be fine, whereas a white potato can't — it will taste over-baked."

Bailey's Wooten further explains, "We worked with a restaurant that took its overages from sweet potatoes the night before, quartered them and used them in an appetizer the next day."

HEALTH BENEFITS ATTRACT CONSUMERS

Sweet potato dishes on the menu can be used to differentiate an operation and convince diners to eat there. "Due to the economy, operators are looking for ways to attract consumers and using sweet potatoes sets

"If they do it right, there shouldn't be any waste with sweet potatoes."

**— Debbie Lee,
J. Roland Wood Farms**

you apart," says Tyson of Sweet Potatoes.

"Consumers will patronize a place with a sweet potato," says Wooten. "They're familiar with it, but it's still different."

"From a business standpoint, you always want variety on your menu," states Sonoma's Groody. "Consumers tend to associate with them and they're more mainstream. Sometimes, they add a sense of a more upscale dish. The health benefits are appealing as well."

As foodservice operators and patrons become more aware of the health attributes of meals, sweet potatoes provide another super food to put on the menu. "Their health benefit alone is why restaurants should offer sweet potatoes to their consumers," says J. Roland's Lee. "They are one of the healthiest vegetables and provide many key nutrients, as well as being a good source of fiber. They're virtually fat- and cholesterol-free and low in sodium."

The NCSPC, the North Carolina Stroke Association, in Winston Salem, NC; the American Cancer Society, in Atlanta, GA; and the American Heart Association (AHA) in Dallas, TX; all endorse sweet potatoes as a nutritious food helpful in the prevention of disease. Additionally, the vegetable ranks extremely high in nutritional value with high contents of both Vitamins A and C.

"By adding flavorful, nutrient-rich sweet potatoes to the menu, foodservice operators can deliver both taste and health to consumers," declares Reynolds of Market Fresh. "More than 72 percent of adults want to eat more healthful meals in restaurants."

OUT OF THE BOX

Creative-thinking chefs are working to provide more options for sweet potatoes. "Quite a few things can be done to enhance a menu using sweet potatoes," states Tyson of Sweet Potatoes. "I have sweet potato corn

Broad Application

All ends of the foodservice spectrum can utilize the sweet potato. "The sweet potato can go white-tablecloth or casual dining because of its versatility and nutrition," states U.St. Sweet Potato Council's executive secretary, Charles Walker. "Once consumers are better educated about the nutrition there will be even more demand for this product. Casual dining is a perfect place for the sweet potato in terms of plate value and pricing."

"White-tablecloth steakhouses, like Heathrow, FL-based Ruth Chris, are offering sweet potatoes as a side," reports Jimmy Burch, a partner with Burch Farms, in Faison, NC. "Then, we see chains like Golden Corral, based in Raleigh, NC, that went from not having any sweet potatoes to having several choices such as baked or casserole. Now, even some of the pizza and fast-food places are introducing sweet potato fries. We have more than a thousand loads going to fries this year."

The versatility of sweet potatoes means they can land anywhere on the menu. "Sweet potatoes can double as a dinner item or a dessert," says Sondria Reynolds, former business development director for Market Fresh Produce LLC, in Nixa, MO. "Some examples include sweet potato hash browns, sweet potato chips, sweet potato bisque and even ice cream. Other applications include baked sweet potatoes, mashed sweet potatoes, sweet potato fries, sweet potato pie, soufflé, crème brûlée and sweet potato frittata."

While some chefs push their creativity by incorporating sweet potatoes into new uses, the product also provides many consistent and easy uses for casual dining

operations and chains. "Sweet potatoes fit well into casual dining," reports Stephanie Tyson, chef and co-owner of Sweet Potatoes, a Restaurant, in Winston-Salem, NC. "Sweet potato fries are excellent and easy to use. They may cost a bit more than regular fries but they provide differentiation. The restaurant may see an increase in the sales of the item with which they're paired. They're great tasting and versatile."

"For restaurants that don't have them on the menu already, one of the easiest ways to incorporate them is to offer a baked sweet potato," says George E. Wooten, president of Wayne E. Bailey Produce Co., in Chadbourne, NC.

"You can do it in-house or there are regional processors who offer pre-cut sweet potatoes," continues Wooten. Another big thing happening now is frozen sweet potato french fries. You can also do some things with fresh-cut sweet potato french fries. One thing we think would be a good product for a mid-level chain is a slab-cut, also called a filet. You can get by with maybe six ounces of prepared product, which will help in cost effectiveness, as opposed to serving a 12-ounce potato."

Consistent, easy or semi-processed products offer an advantage for chain or casual dining operations. "For example, sweet potato fries and sweet potato chips translate easily to more informal restaurants," states Reynolds.

"Chain restaurants can take advantage of more mainstream products, such as fries or mashed potatoes," notes Groody. "They should cater to what their clients want and what can be duplicated with ease and consistency."

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bread stuffing on the menu, for example. If you think out of the box you can come up with some really great things."

"Some trendy uses at restaurants include fries as appetizers, as well as mashed sweet potatoes with both sweet and savory flavorings," notes Johnson-Langdon.

"Grilling is becoming a serious trend and sweet potatoes are a great item for the grill," adds Wooten. "They make a delicious appetizer as individual fried potato chips, or you can do cubes and make rosemary-roasted sweet potatoes."

As consumers respond to sweet potato dishes, more unique appetizers and entrées will create excitement in your operation. "Sweet potatoes provide diners with new

taste choices," offers Johnson-Langdon. "For example, sweet potato fries with a savory dip, such as blue cheese, as an appetizer will create a buzz."

"A baked sweet potato is usually the most prepared in restaurants," says Quebedeaux of Harold Quebedeaux. "Besides baked sweet potatoes and sweet potato pie, restaurants are offering other dishes and desserts made with sweet potatoes, such as salads, breads, soups, soufflés and cheesecakes."

"I do a lot of gratins with apple, onion, sweet potatoes and cheese on top," reports Groody. "They caramelize well and don't discolor. You fry them a little differently than a regular potato but you get a sweeter product as opposed to a french fry."

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Score Big With Sport Snacks

Good nutrition adds appeal to dried fruit and nut sport snacks.

BY BARBARA ROBISON

The old phrase, "Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack," sung at ball games everywhere, says it all. Snacking goes hand-in-hand with watching or attending sports events, or participating in sports activities. However, snack selections are changing. Today, more consumers view dried fruits and nuts as healthful snack alternatives because of increased attention to good eating.

"The nutritional value of dried fruits and nuts remains a prominent reason for the selection of products we offer," explains Dwaine Stevens, media and community relations manager for the Jacksonville division of Lakeland, FL-based Publix Super Markets Inc.

"Fifteen years ago, baking was the number one use for dried fruits," adds Joe Tamble, vice president of sales, North America for Sun-Maid Growers of California, located in Kingsburg, CA. "While there is still a sizable core of bakers, more dried fruits are being eaten as healthful snacks. Younger consumers, especially, are discovering dried fruits as delicious natural snacks. Today, we offer a greater choice of dried fruits than ever before."

Tying in major sporting events with displays of dried fruits for snacks in the produce department can effectively introduce consumers to the idea. "Dried fruits are impulse items and when markets carry displays in the produce section, they can see a 20 to 30 percent increase in sales velocity," states Jeff McLemore, product manager of dried fruit for Sunsweet Growers Inc., headquartered in Yuba City, CA. "Kroger has done an excellent job using display shippers to draw consumers. Publix has also used successful displays promoting dried fruits as healthy snack choices."

New nutritional information is continually being developed regarding various dried fruits. Major benefits have centered on the natural sugars and antioxidants they provide. Calcium, potassium and trace miner-



Tying in major sporting events with a display of nuts can increase sales.

als, such as iron, are important dried fig contributions to the diet, and interest in dried figs as a snack is continually growing, according to Linda M. Cain, vice president of marketing and retail sales at Valley Fig Growers in Fresno, CA.

"A produce department's merchandising tie-in with dried fruits and nuts and sporting events is one way to show the department is a center for healthful eating," says Andrew Stillman, president of the Minneapolis, MN-based Ampport Foods. "Innovative displays get consumers' attention and once they purchase and taste dried fruit snacks, you've developed future customers."

Ampport Foods supplies plastic containers in the shape of a football to assist retailers in marketing its dried fruit and trail mix products during the Super Bowl season. "We offer flexible packages with resealable ziplocks, which can be carried in a pocket, purse or backpack," notes Stillman. "They make ideal snack containers when attending a ball game, going skiing or hiking."

The sales of some items, such as dried cranberries, have become trendy with the expansion of the dried fruit category. Sun-Maid Growers markets a 6-pack of dried

cranberries that is popular to carry to sporting events or when participating in sports activities. Sunsweet's individually wrapped dried plums are the fastest-growing item in its dried fruit line.

"Dried apricots, cranberries and blueberries are among the most popular alternative healthy snack items we offer," states Stevens. "We consistently promote various healthful snack alternatives throughout the year for Spring Training, NBA and NFL Playoffs, the World Series and Super Bowl. We regularly offer our stores promotional materials and display units for assorted snacks and dried fruits, which they can use to tie in with local sports activities."

Jons Markets Inc., a Los Angeles, CA-based chain with 14 stores, promotes peanuts, pistachios, trail mixes and dried fruit for Super Bowl, baseball season and other sporting events, notes George Sapondzhyan, produce supervisor and merchandiser.

Crispy Green Inc., located in Fairfield, NJ, promotes its snacks as having "no added sugar, preservatives, colors, flavors, fat or cholesterol," states president Angela Liu. "If a product is nutritious and delicious, con-

sumers will discover that fruit can be fun to eat. Women, especially those watching their weight, will welcome the Grab & Go 6-packs with small, snack-sized portions to enjoy at sports events."

"As a major private-label dried fruit supplier, we consistently utilize many merchandising tools to help retailers align promotions with large sporting events," reports Jane Asmar, director of branded retail sales, corporate accounts at National Raisin Co., based in Fowler, CA, which offers a complete line of dried fruit, snack nut and trail mix products. "With the consumer movement toward more healthful products, we see more retailer interest in tie-ins to local venues such as college team match-ups, sponsored run-the-bases events, Coach's Corner television shows and team exhibitions that teach sports fundamentals to local groups. These tend to get outstanding media coverage and loyal followings. Our Disney brand dried fruit has been used for consumer sampling at major Disney events."

NUTRITIOUS NUTS

Trail mixes are a popular way to combine both flavorful, nutritious dried fruits and nuts. Econo Foods, an Iron Mountain, MI-based chain with six stores, carries trail mixes year-around, according to Jim Weber, produce director. "We sell a lot of nuts for different sporting events throughout the year. We sell hundreds of pounds of peanuts during the Wisconsin/Michigan hunting season, and peanuts are popular during the football season with local Packer, Lion and Viking fans. I order bins of pistachios for Super Bowl time and they are also a favorite of hunters."

Nuts have taken on a new luster as current research shows individual nuts make more valuable contributions to good health. "We represent nine different nuts and each nut has its own special nutritional attributes," reports Maureen Ternus, M.S., R.D., the executive director of the Davis, CA-based International Tree Nut Council Nutrition Research and Education Foundation. "They contribute protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals and no one nut is better than another."

The foundation provides its members with the most current nutrition and health research information. "It is recommended that a person eat one and one-half ounces of nuts per day to help prevent heart disease," asserts Ternus. "The only thing we recommend is to be sure and watch the portion size. Keep it to about one-third of a cup, which is the amount suggested to reduce the risk of heart disease."

Peanuts — long a sport snack favorite — are still going strong, according to Betsy

Owens, executive director of Virginia-Carolina Peanut Promotions, based in Nashville, TN. "We have provided sports-oriented displays, posters and pricing signs for years. We also have held successful display contests. Today, we know health has a greater impact on consumers choosing peanuts and other nuts for sport snacks. Our most popular product is the 12-ounce size of in-shell peanuts."

Like dried fruits, pecans have been used most often as a baking ingredient, but now 61 percent of those surveyed said they are eating pecans as a snack, states Ashley Lansdale, an account executive at Sahlman Williams, a Tampa, FL-based public relations firm representing the Georgia Pecan Commission. "Georgia pecans are not just a crunchy sports treat, but also a healthy nut. Recent research revealed consumers are more likely to purchase pecans once they are aware of the nutritional benefits. Pecans are rich in vitamin E and thiamine, and they are a good source of fiber and antioxidants."

Bryan, TX-based Texas Pecan Growers Association promotes pecans as a healthful snack and can provide samplings and recipes for special sporting event promotions, according to Blair Krebs, associate director of sales and marketing.

"Ninety percent of our pistachios are still eaten out-of-hand, so they make an excellent sport snack," states Richard Matoian, executive director of the Fresno, CA-based Western Pistachio Association. "The roasted salted or just roasted in-shell nuts are still the most popular, but newer products with kernels removed from the shell are gaining in popularity." In recognition of increased consumer interest in more intense flavors, the industry is experimenting with different pistachio flavors, including salt and pepper, jalapeño and chipotle.

Health is the largest driving force behind the marketing programs of Paramount Farms Inc., headquartered in Los Angeles, CA, reports Marc Seguin, director of marketing. "People love pistachios as a social snack, especially for sporting events, but they also feel good about serving a healthy snack. The week prior to the Super Bowl is our single best week for pistachio sales." Paramount Farms provides easy-to-use one-quarter and one-half pallet pistachio bins and encourages retailers to feature the nuts for all the divisional games leading up to the Super Bowl itself.

For greater success in marketing pistachios, especially for sporting events, Seguin suggests three things: Have a hot price so consumers think there is something special, run retail ads and be sure to display plentiful supplies.

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Reader Service # 50

ASB GREENWORLD, ONTARIO, CANADA

David Turnbull, CHT, CSP, was hired as sales manager. He is a past-president of Landscape Ontario and has served on many volunteer committees supporting the ornamental horticulture industry during the past 20 years. He comes to ASB Greenworld with many years of experience in sales and marketing in all facets of the industry.



FARMER'S WEST FLOWERS & BOUQUETS INC., CARPINTERIA, CA

Linda Giovannozzi recently joined the sales team as director of sales and marketing. Formerly with Elite Flower, Miami, FL, she has more than 30 years of floral industry experience in sales and management. **Marc Robinson**, formerly with Dole Fresh Flowers, Miami, FL, has joined the Farmer's West Flowers & Bouquet team as senior account manager. He brings with him 24 years of floral industry experience in sales, marketing, management and logistics.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

DOUBLE TEAM EFFORT

The John Henry Company, Lansing, MI, recently added TGM Marketing Group, Garland, TX, to its organization. Headquartered in the company's Dallas, TX, facility, the team develops custom branding and differentiated marketing programs utilizing its unique technologies for value-added printing on plastic, paperboard and paper.



Reader Service No. 318

SENDING FLOWERS TO AMERICA

The American Florists' Exchange Ltd., dba Los Angeles Flower Market, Los Angeles, CA, announces the publication of a hardbound, 288-page, full-color, pictorial history titled *Sending Flowers to America: History of the Los Angeles Flower Market and the People Who Built an American Floral Industry*.



Reader Service No. 319

NEW PRODUCTS

BOOKING SUMMER ORDERS

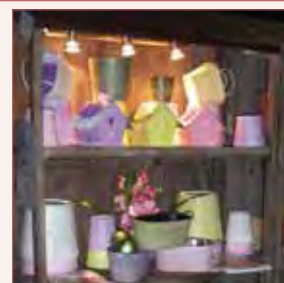
Vaughan Inc., Sanford, FL, introduces Sand Castles — a whimsical collection of metal pails featuring a three-plant garden and beach scenes. Summer plant sales can be boosted by brightly colored mermaids and fish. The collectible, 5-inch sand pail gardens ship nine to a case. Orders need to be pre-booked 90 days prior to shipping.



Reader Service No. 320

DISPLAY EFFORTS MATTER

Willow Group Ltd, Batavia, NY, offers easy-to-use display shelves ideal for merchandising plants and floral department collectibles. The sturdy, wooden shelving units are also simple to disassemble and store. These shelving units can accept optional display lights. The rustic-looking shelves bring charm, simplicity and convenience to floral departments.



Reader Service No. 321

MERCHANDISING FOR MOMS

burton & BURTON, Bogart, GA is encouraging retailers to remember moms in a big way with these ready-to-fill, lined, tin planters. The 4-inch Mom tins measure 4.5" H x 5.25" W x 5.25" D and are shipped in sets of six. In sets of four, the 6-inch tins measure 6.25" H x 7.25" W x 7.25" D.



Reader Service No. 322

NATURALLY GLOSSY FROM HAWAII

Hawaiian Sunshine Nursery Inc., Hilo, HI, introduces a patent-pending plant with beautiful and consistent variegation called *Dracaena 'Hawaiian Sunshine'*. The plant is superior to *Dracaena Massangeana* due to its excellent durability in the interior, smaller-leaf size, darker green leaves and its retention of variegation.



Reader Service No. 323

MAKE IT VIBRANT FOR MOM

Nurserymen's Exchange Inc., Half Moon Bay, CA, introduces 4-inch Orange Star in an eye-catching decorative ceramic container. Orange Star, an exclusive variety to the company, is a compact plant with large, vibrant flowers and excellent shelf life.



Reader Service No. 324

SHOW YOUR PATRIOTISM

Potter Inc., Bryan, OH, offers 10-inch, 12 loop, large decorative patriotic bows. They arrive on clip strips for convenient cross merchandising and include UPC labels. Also available in yellow to show support, the ready-made, poly ribbon bows bring a true punch of patriotism to floral departments and are easy to use for home patriotic displays.



Reader Service No. 325

Floral Watch is a regular feature of *PRODUCE BUSINESS*. Please send information on new products, personnel changes, industry, corporate and personal milestones and available literature, along with a color photo, slide or transparency to: Managing Editor, *PRODUCE BUSINESS*, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425, or e-mail us at ProduceBusiness@phoenixmedianet.com

Keep Sales Fresh With Product Balance

How Stater Bros. and Schnuck's create a balance between conservative and trendy offerings.

BY COLLEEN MCGINN

Tapping into the emotions and needs of floral customers, noticing color trends and reacting to changes in the economy enables retailers to better cater to floral customers. Capitalizing on the strong appeal of locally grown products, savvy floral executives are re-examining their departments from the ground up. Creating a local florist atmosphere within a supermarket means offering consumers a welcoming environment that features a wide range of floral products, services and gifts.

THE FEEL GOOD FACTOR

Stater Bros. Markets, a San Bernardino, CA-based chain, and Schnuck Markets Inc., headquartered in St. Louis, MO, both have boutique environments to make shoppers feel like the floral department is its own special place. Michael Schrader, Schnuck's floral manager, has organized many successful events within the floral department. "We did several open-house types of events at four of our stores and they were very successful. We created an environment that was like a florist shop, serving cider and cookies, and we had floral designers on-site showing customers how to personalize their wreaths. We had a peppermint-themed tree, as well as a more dramatic bronze, glass ornament tree, and had signage clearly stating that all the ornaments on the trees were for sale," he explains. "We love the holiday season and having consumers come into the store. This was so successful, we are expanding to 12 stores next year."

Schrader recognizes his core consumer base and provides for them accordingly, without alienating his edgier and fashion-forward consumers. "This Christmas, I went with a very traditional theme," he says. "Red and gold, as well as some all white. We live



Each Schnuck Market caters to its own geographic need.

in the conservative Midwest and I believe that people should not be told what they want. They want to tell you. So, if this means poinsettias, I provide them. I went for items that appealed to customers' sense of nostalgia, because of the downward spiraling economy."

Liane Mast, floral director of Stater Bros., describes how her company has also capitalized on this trend. "We have home-decor stores and we merchandise them like gift shops, displaying candles and candle holders, picture frames, art glass, clocks, ceramics, wooden and metal boxes and even furniture. We cater to gift buyers and those consumers who make impulse buys." Mast keeps merchandise displays fresh and inviting by buying for the boutique quarterly. To serve customers with a special event, Stater Bros. prominently displays an order book to schedule services in advance for weddings and other large events.

When making choices for new product offerings, Mast listens to her customers, as well as her vendors, such as Martha

Moreno, a sales representative at Vista, CA-based Rose Gonzales Plants Inc. Moreno loves to create a value-added element to potted plants, and takes responsibility for keeping consumers on the cusp of holiday trends — old and new. For example, "For Friendship Day, I added braided friendship bracelets as a keepsake on potted plants. It was very popular with teen buyers," reveals Moreno. Similarly, "Pet Appreciation Day went over well with floral wrap imprinted with cat and paw prints."

CREATE BUYING OPPORTUNITIES

Despite a faltering economy, keen floral executives know everyone isn't affected, and there are always some consumers willing to splurge for a special occasion or a must-have item. Schrader's biggest Christmas surprise came from a decision to sell collectible Santas. "These collectibles are not your ordinary purchase, they are a very big ticket item. They stand six feet tall, have a 6-foot tree attached and retail for \$700,"

Suppliers See A Greener Horizon

Confusion in the marketplace about what constitutes green flowers and plants has floral buyers and retailers in a bit of a spin. Most people would consider any living thing green, but some consumers also want to know if growers are organic, local or sustainable or maybe even some combination of all three. Adding to the confusion is the fact that not all sustainable farms are organic, nor are all organic farms certified sustainable. The local label can also be confusing because it can mean different things to different people. It remains to be seen how this labeling will influence consumers in the near future.

While much of the nation remains puzzled from all these buzzwords, California consumers may be looking for locally grown flowers. According to the Sacramento, CA-based California Cut Flower Commission industry survey, 55 percent of California consumers would buy local flowers if given a choice.

Not every region has locally grown flowers available, and some growers are betting that in the future, consumers are going to be looking for flowers and plants

that have earth- and worker-friendly credentials instead, such as the VeriFlora certification. B and H Flowers, located in Carpinteria, CA, has obtained the VeriFlora certification to demonstrate to buyers that its farms meet VeriFlora requirements for sustainable farming practices, labor relations and product quality assurance. Scott Fulton, vice president of sales and marketing at B and H, which markets VeriFlora-certified Gerbera daisies, lilies, tulips and irises to supermarkets across the country, observes that consumers are discovering the benefits of sustainably grown flowers. "Our quality is competitive, and retailers are getting savvy to the idea that consumers are requesting and buying products that are sustainably grown."

Sharon Mikulinski, marketing manager at Passion Growers, a Miami, FL-based supplier to Schnuck's, has noticed a similar change. "Customers ask if we are sustainably certified. This seems to be the foremost thought of retailers now." Passion Growers has a number of sustainable certifications including GlobalGAP, VeriFlora, as well as the newly acquired Rainforest Alliance Certification. **pb**

details Schrader. Even the most optimistic retailer would be pushing the bounds of impulse shopping with an offering like this. "I was shocked at the success of these items," adds Schrader. "I didn't think I could sell one \$700 Santa much less five, but I like to leave myself open to being surprised. I can't always predict what the customer will want, so it's good to have some creative items. You never know what will strike a chord in a buyer."

Looking for opportunities in a down market, Schrader also opted to add \$9.99 rose bouquets to Schnuck's offerings. "Our volume was up, but our margins were down. Nonetheless, we moved a great deal of those bouquets and I'm really glad I made the decision to offer them," states Schrader.

Reaching out to younger buyers, Schrader also keeps brightly dyed daisies in stock for his teenage customers. "They have a long vase life and are lower priced. Even young consumers are looking for value."

REACH OUT TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Mast makes sure Stater Bros. stores are

plugged in to the local communities. "We market to the schools for proms, dances, graduations, etc. We currently have a hospital that buys single roses twice a week for the maternity ward," Mast continues. "Stores with cemeteries in the area are fully stocked for holidays and memorial events."

Schnuck's allows each store to serve its local community by ordering out of a central warehouse. This way, stores near cemeteries and hospitals can order what their customers need. According to Schrader, "Every market caters to its own geographic need. Our stores near cemeteries and churches order flowers based on what their customers need, and store managers get them from a central warehouse, so we can always be sure to have product where it is needed and wanted."

BUYING GREEN

Mast runs a "green" sale twice a year at Stater Bros. and markets the clean air benefits of having green foliage in the home and office. Another "green" initiative, which is the marketing of sustainable products, is relatively new to her floral departments. "We

have several grower/vendors that have done a tremendous job of putting worthwhile programs together, and we plan on taking advantage of them sometime in the future," reveals Mast.

Eco-friendly items aren't very important to Schrader's customers in Missouri. "We tried marketing [sustainable] floral, but it just didn't go over well," he admits. "Our customers assume that flowers are already green and won't pay a premium for organic flowers and plants when the shelf life is not any longer than regular plants." Nonetheless, he continues to buy from Passion Growers, a Miami, FL-based sustainable grower that imports roses from South America. According to Schrader, Passion Growers has an excellent product with great color selection, and the company is competitive with growers that don't have eco-friendly certifications. He orders sustainably grown flowers because it's the right thing to do.

ATTRACTING NEW CONSUMERS

Since hearing members of a consumer panel express that they read the floral ads in the mailers and some even look forward to seeing what's new in the floral department for the week, Mast makes sure Stater Bros. newspaper ads send a clear message. "It's important that the ad makes sense, whether it's a color, fragrance or charity theme, such as breast cancer awareness, or rose promotions for National Rose Month in June," explains Mast. "We have done several different types of programs marketing color themes, such as purple passion or mellow yellow, where all plants and flowers are in shades of purple or yellow. We also have a Mum of the Month program that features a specific kind of Mum and promotes the unique qualities of the plant."

Stater Bros. also advertises in the *Penny Saver* during holidays. "Floral has the dominant space in the weekly mailer and is strongly advertised in the local newspapers," states Mast, who also works with advertising to market the benefits of flowers through in-store signage, as well as targeted ad content. "Our *Healthy Selections* magazine ran an article titled 'Happiness Blooms with Flowers,' which covered a study done by Camden, NJ-based Rutgers University and the Society of American Florists," says Mast. The study revealed flowers have an immediate impact on happiness, with recipients expressing true and delighted smiles, regardless of gender and age — a great reason to visit your local floral shop. **pb**



Health Is More Than Diet

At the beginning of each year, dieting becomes a popular topic after most people have indulged in excessive calorie consumption during the holidays. One of the first dieting stories of the year came from California's San Diego Zoo. In 2008, facing a crisis of reduced income coupled with overweight elephants, the decision was made to put the elephants on a diet. The diet included removal of the usual feeding area replaced by a type of feeding trail that required the elephants to exercise in order to obtain food, resulting in a weight reduction that averaged nearly 1,500 pounds for each of the seven mammals. "It mirrors what goes on in the human world," explains John Lehnhardt, animal director at Disney World, in Orlando, FL. "Being lighter and getting more exercise is better for your health."

For years, the overweight population has continued to increase, even as more organizations attempt to take advantage of the call for good eating in an effort to enhance product sales. For many, the message is working, and the Produce For Better Health Foundation's (PBH) Fruits and Veggies More Matters program is among the best. But it only focuses on one side of the equation, and the current economic environment makes it more challenging for consumers to react to the More Matters message. According to a survey conducted this past summer by the Produce Marketing Association (PMA), consumers noted that steep rises in fresh produce prices would cause them to reduce their consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables in favor of other options.

While President Obama is amazingly fit at age 47, a recent cartoon characterization in *USA Today* showed the average, 40-something male is 5-foot 9-inches and weighs an average of 190 pounds — obviously overweight. Likewise, the female population has even greater concerns regarding weight-related problems. This newspaper also ran a week-long weight loss challenge series with the theme of losing pounds while saving money. Details for this home-centered inexpensive program are available on *USA Today's* Web site.

It is important we recognize how the population arrived at its current state of physical fitness — or lack thereof. At the beginning of the twentieth century, 60 percent of the population was classified as rural. Through the years, the unintended consequences of mechanization and information technology helped create a population

that settled in an urban area, many of whom are not regularly physically active.

In an effort to fight the growing obesity epidemic, a number of corporate sponsors, such as Campbell's Soup, Johnson & Johnson, Celestial Seasonings, Cheerios, Minute Maid, Quaker Oats and Coca-Cola have partnered with the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI). Recently, my wife received an e-mail referenc-

ing Coca-Cola as a continuing Heart Truth Partner. This program is directed at women and focuses on diets low in fat, as well as 30 minutes a day of moderate-intensity physical activity. Part of the Coca-Cola program includes a downloadable exercise video for participants purchasing Coke products.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site includes partnerships with the American Cancer Society (ACS), the American Diabetes Association (ADA) and the American Heart Association (AHA), in addition to the PBH and the major produce industry groups for support of More Matters. Additionally, a growing number of retailers are creating their own rating programs for identifying the nutritional attributes of various products throughout their stores, providing ample messages about healthful eating for consumers.

Overall, there are numerous organizations involved with the diet portion of the equation, but each individually fails to create a significant impact in the minds of most consumers. This is most likely due to the fact that coordi-

nated messages focusing on the importance of exercise programs are relatively few and lacking the depth necessary to motivate large population segments.

Stanford University professor Hayagreeva Rao's new book, *Market Rebels*, explains the role of activists in making or breaking new markets, products and services. Critical for many activists is articulating a hot cause that arouses emotion and creates a community of members by emphasizing open lines of communication with consumers. Being responsive to consumers doesn't mean doing something to consumers; it means doing something with consumers.

Somewhere among all the numerous organizations with an interest in health, the hope is that one organization can step away from the pack and lead the others toward developing and implementing a coordinated diet and exercise program that will motivate consumers to become slim, trim and healthy. Mirroring the San Diego elephants would be a true stimulus package.

pb

There are numerous organizations involved with the diet portion of the equation, but each individually fails to create a significant impact in the minds of most consumers.



Progressive Strides In Denmark Affect Produce Consumption

An interview with Vibeke Toft, National 6-A-Day Coordinator for the 6-A-Day Denmark Program in Copenhagen, Denmark

PB: How exactly does your organization operate?

Toft: We work through a public-private partnership with partners from governmental food and health organizations, non-governmental health organizations and the fruit and vegetable industry. Our members include the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration; the National Board of Health; the Danish Cancer Society; the Danish Heart Foundation; the Danish Fruit Vegetable and Potato Board; the Danish Meat Association; FDB (a consumer organization owning Denmark's biggest retailer organization) and Dansk Gartneri (the Danish green grocers).

PB: Why work through partnerships?

Toft: We think partnerships are necessary because they provide more resources and increase credibility, relevance and legitimacy. They also help with dealing with regulations and communication channels, as well as giving a feeling of greater ownership and thus adding to the sustainability of the program. Lastly, partnerships expand the spheres of influence.

PB: What is your program's main goal?

Toft: Our principal goal is to get people to eat more fruits and vegetables. We work to increase availability by providing easy access to fruit and vegetables at home, in shopping centers, in schools and at work. We also focus on communicating the advantages of fruit and vegetables — going beyond the simple message of them being healthful, because people already know that — concentrating on the message of how they taste good and provide energy. We also provide good ideas on how to eat more. Our work also involves lobbying, networking and documentation.

PB: What is the focus of your activities right now?

Toft: We believe not only in communication, but also in availability and ready-to-eat products. Simply make the product available and ready-to-eat and they will eat it. Changing behavior first can be more efficient than trying to change knowledge, attitudes and values to indirectly change behavior, especially in a society where knowledge is no longer an issue. Our main target group is families with children from ages 4 to 14 years old who are motivated to increase their intake. We are interested in lifting the bottom to get those who eat less than 10 ounces per day to eat more. This group has been chosen because many families do not eat enough fruits and vegetables, and it's important to begin healthful habits early in one's life.

PB: What changes have you seen in consumer reaction and/or retailer reaction to increasing consumption in your country?

Toft: It's always difficult to find out where the changes come from, but since the beginning of the 6-A-Day Program in 1999, consumption in Denmark has gone up by 40 percent. Nearly 84 percent of all Danes know our slogan, although not necessarily the same amount follow it. One of our main focus areas this year is to concentrate on retail, and make it easier and more attractive to buy healthful food that incorporates fruit and vegetables. In Denmark, convenience food is not as common as in the United States. We do not think of it as healthful or fresh, and some mothers think they aren't good mothers when they don't cook everything from scratch. So we have some communication to do in the ready-to-eat area.

PB: What are some of the main activities you're doing now?

Toft: We're working on a school-fruit scheme. We're also working to provide easier access to healthful and quick food solutions in shops in partnerships with the retail chains. Additionally, we're communicating that it's OK to use easy, healthful solutions. We would like to introduce families to the solutions that other families use to get their children to eat more fruit and vegetables. We will be highlighting real people's success stories. We want to provoke the parents a bit and help them see that being a parent also involves healthful eating habits.

PB: What activity would you like to do if you had unlimited resources?

Toft: I wish we could do TV commercials. We can learn a lot from the companies selling products that are not healthful. This medium really works with children.

PB: What do you consider one of your major successes so far?

Toft: Our Workplace Fruit Program, which we started in 1999, has been a great success. It gives free fruit — paid for by employers — to employees during the workday. At that time, the concept was almost unknown. Today, about 40 percent of Danish workplaces regularly provide free fruit to their employees.

pb

Nearly 84 percent of all Danes know our slogan, although not necessarily the same amount follow it.

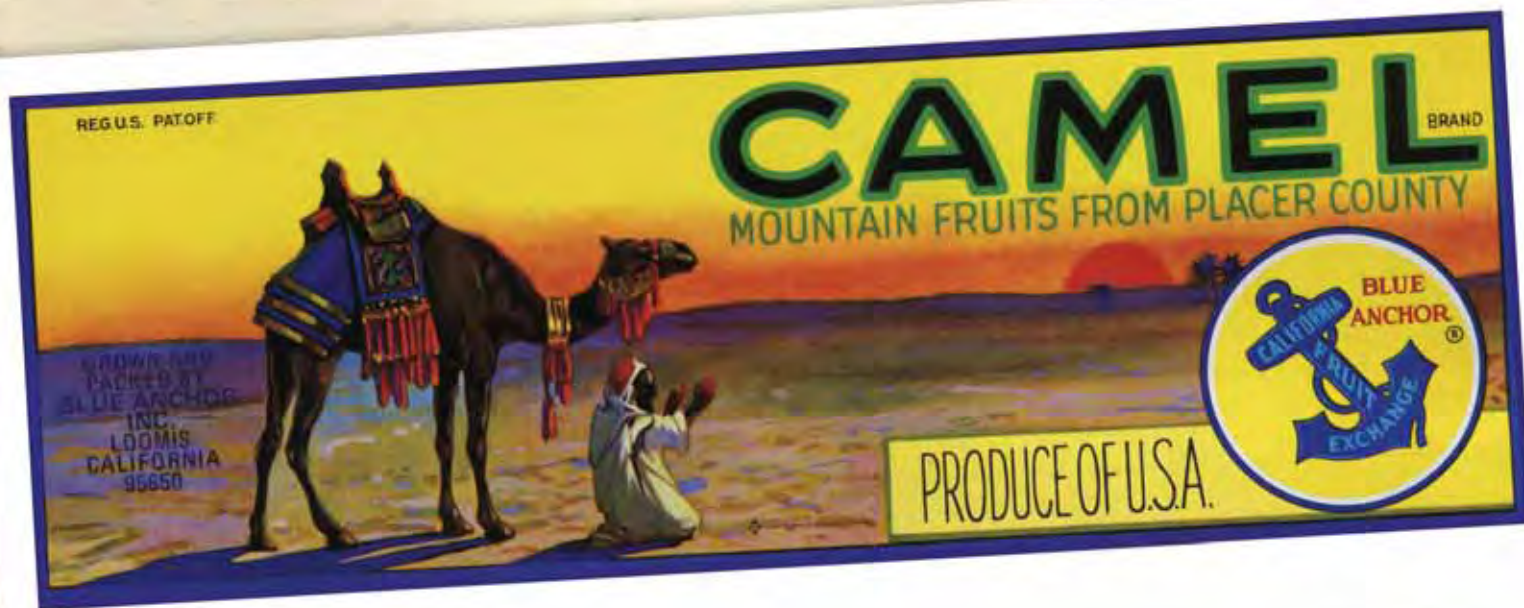
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Blast from the Past



From the archives of *PRODUCE BUSINESS*, we bring you this interesting history of fruit labeling. When it comes to fruit labels, the brand not only identifies the grower's product, but sometimes provides interesting information about the company, its people and the time period in which the label was created.

Such is the story behind the Camel label, used by Blue Anchor Inc., the now defunct Sacramento, CA-based grower/shipper formerly known as the California Fruit Exchange. Blue Anchor

labeled its stone fruit sourced from the Sierra foothills near Loomis and Placerville, CA. The Camel label traces back to Al Ackerman, who, in 1924, was manager of the Penryn Fruit Growers Association in Penryn, CA, a small town in the Sierra foothills.

Ackerman was an avid cigarette smoker who firmly believed there was no finer cigarette made than the Camel brand. He wanted to label the fruit packed by his association after the names he thought represented the best — Camel. Another member of this association, however, was determined to

market this fruit under the Jack Rabbit label and had gone as far as having artwork created for his proposed label. A battle over these names persisted for several months until Camel emerged the winner. The label, depicting a camel in the desert, was never registered, but the cigarette manufacturer agreed to let Blue Anchor use it on its fruit boxes.

While the Camel label no longer appears on plums, kiwifruit, persimmons, Asian and Bosc pears, grapes, olives and nectarines, the interesting history behind the colorful collector's item lives on.

pb

The *Blast from the Past* is a regular feature of *PRODUCE BUSINESS*. We welcome submissions of your old photos, labels or advertisements along with suggested captions. Please send materials to: Editor, *PRODUCE BUSINESS*, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425, or e-mail info@producebusiness.com

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